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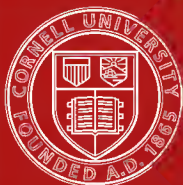
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# FIJIAN SOCIETY



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# FIJIAN SOCIETY

OR THE

## SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FIJIAN

BY

REV. W. DEANE, M.A. (Syd.), B.D. (Lond.)

Late Principal of the Teachers' Training College,  
Ndávuilévu, Fiji.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
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TO MY WIFE



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE work entitled "Fijian Society" was undertaken in the first place at the instance of Professor Anderson of Sydney University, in whose Philosophy class the author was a student. When the latter went as a Missionary to the Fiji Group, the Professor was good enough to take an interest in his preparation for the Master of Arts' examination, and suggested as a thesis an anthropological study of the Fijian people. That thesis formed the foundation of the following chapters. The necessity for such a study is great, because the old men who have an intelligent knowledge of the past are dying out. Very few remain with sufficient vigour of memory to relate accurately what they have seen.

In his examination of Fijian Society the author was aided by a knowledge of the vernacular, and by experiences which brought him into daily contact with the Fijians. But he recognises that the present work is very incomplete, and that there is much information still in Fiji to be collected and recorded.

It is the wish of the author to recognise the valuable advice received from the late C. Etheridge, Esq., Curator of the Sydney Museum, and the Rev. B. Danks,

Honorary Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia, also his debt to the staff of the Mitchell Library for their courtesy in placing at his disposal the resources of the Library, and to Mr. P. S. Allen for allowing the inclusion in this volume of the very valuable Bibliography on Fiji prepared by him for the "Handbook of the Pacific."

BATHURST, N.S.W.,

October, 1920.

#### NOTE ON SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION.

In the spelling of Fijian words the Author has used the Anglicised form adopted by Mr. Basil Thomson, Dr. Rivers, and others. The reader will pronounce *a* as in *path*, *e* as in *net*, *i* as *ee*, *o* as in *not*, *u* as *oo*, *au* as *ow* in *cow*, *ou* as *oh*, *ai* as *i* in *sight*, *ei* as *ay* in *way*, *oi* as *oy* in *boy*.

The author is under obligation, for comparative and corroborative references, to the following works, which are arranged as nearly as possible according to date of publication:—

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# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
PRELIMINARY REMARKS . . . . .	I

## CHAPTER II

CHILD-LIFE—GAMES—INITIATION CEREMONIES . . . . .	10
--	----

## CHAPTER III

RELIGION . . . . .	24
--------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV

ANCESTOR-WORSHIP . . . . .	39
----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER V

ANCESTOR-WORSHIP— <i>continued</i> . TANÓVU, THE KALÓU VU OF ÓNO, KANDÁVU . . . . .	47
--	----

## CHAPTER VI

THE KALÓU VU— <i>continued</i> . . . . .	58
--	----

## CHAPTER VII

SACRED STONES AND IMAGES . . . . .	65
------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VIII

SYMBOLISM . . . . .	72
---------------------	----

## CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLISM— <i>continued</i> . THE <i>TAMBŪA</i> , OR WHALE'S TOOTH .	PAGE 77
--	------------

## CHAPTER X

SYMBOLISM AND CHIEFTAINSHIP . . . . .	90
---------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XI

THE CLAN <i>versus</i> INDIVIDUALISM . . . . .	98
--	----

## CHAPTER XII

INDIVIDUALISM <i>versus</i> THE CLAN . . . . .	109
--	-----

## CHAPTER XIII

MORAL CHARACTER—THE “ <i>KÉRÈKÉRÈ</i> ” . . . . .	116
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIV

MORAL CHARACTER— <i>continued</i> . TABOO, AND THE GROWTH OF CONSCIENCE . . . . .	125
--	-----

## CHAPTER XV

ETIQUETTE . . . . .	130
---------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVI

TRUTH, CONSCIENCE AND CRIME . . . . .	140
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVII

SUPERSTITION—SIGNS AND OMENS . . . . .	149
--	-----

## CHAPTER XVIII

FISHING AND ITS SUPERSTITIONS . . . . .	166
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIX

	PAGE
NET-MAKING . . . . .	182

## CHAPTER XX

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION . . . . .	191
----------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXI

FOODS AND FOOD-PROHIBITIONS . . . . .	207
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXII

CANNIBALISM . . . . .	223
-----------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FIJI . . . . .	243
--------------------------------	-----

INDEX . . . . .	249
-----------------	-----



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A FIJIAN . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A FIJIAN WOMAN . . . . .	<i>Facing page</i> II
A VILLAGE SCENE . . . . .	73
DRYING MÁSI . . . . .	73
FIJIAN GIRLS . . . . .	80
TURTLE FISHERS . . . . .	176
ROCK FISH FENCE . . . . .	176
GIRL WITH VIRGIN PLAITS . . . . .	195
BEATING A SMALL LÁLI . . . . .	199
A WARRIOR WITH NECKLACE . . . . .	227
MAP OF THE FIJI GROUP . . . . .	<i>End of Volume</i>



# FIJIAN SOCIETY

## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

It is generally accepted that Fiji is the meeting-place of the Polynesian and Melanesian races.<sup>1</sup> If, in earlier times, any section of the Aryan megalithic peoples arrived by way of Japan, no traces of their workmanship can be found, nor is there any tradition which refers to them.<sup>2</sup> That the dominant elements of Fijian life and character are Polynesian<sup>3</sup> and Melanesian, is supported by the observations of all who have studied the question.

Every shade of colour, from light brown passing through copper colour to dark brown, appears among the people. Judging from the variations in their complexion, it would seem that the union of the two races is not fully completed.

The foregoing statement is borne out by the many

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Mr. Basil Thomson's "The Fijians," pp. 6, 15, 70.

<sup>2</sup> Except, perhaps, the Nángga stones as described by Dr. L. Fison.

<sup>3</sup> The very name "Víti" (Anglicised as Fiji) is purely Polynesian.

*Vid.* a paper by Horatius Hale, F.R.S.C., *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Sept., 1894, p. 146. The name appears constantly in Maori poetry and in Eastern Polynesian nomenclature.

types of faces to be seen in the Group. One is curiously aware of features among the Fijians which correspond to the Aryan, Mongolian, Egyptian, Negroid and Papuan physiognomies. It might be true also that the races which met in Fiji had, before they arrived in their island home, blended at divers times with divers peoples. The racial strains thus taken up by the Fijians in their progress to the Pacific Ocean reappear in these later days.

The admixture has produced in the Fijian a certain ingenuity which distinguishes him, in some respects, from most of the Pacific islanders. These people became great house and canoe-builders. It is said that, in former days, they supplied Tonga with war-vessels. They were also adept potters, net-makers, and fishermen.

The character of the people of the Fijian Group is simple ; yet, owing to their natural reserve, it is difficult to understand. No people could be more complete masters of their emotions when occasion requires self-control. They will reveal their minds only to those whom they know well, or who, by some means, have ingratiated themselves into their favour.

Fijian legends respecting the immigration of the race vary considerably, but they have two things in common, viz., a general vagueness as to the land from which they originally came, and a definite belief that they arrived from the north-west.

The inhabitants of the island called Vanúa Lévú have no traditions of the kind above-mentioned. To



them their land is "*kéndra vanúa*"—their very own land. The absence of a story describing immigration to Vanúa Lévu is important when compared with the general absence of such tradition amongst the Melanesian peoples.<sup>1</sup> The fact indicates an exceedingly long settlement in the islands, and brings the people of Vanúa Lévu into line with the Melanesian aborigines of the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

Another point of interest should be noted. Vanúa Lévu has many distinct signs of the matriarchate. Descent is through the mother, and the natives can trace their pedigree back for thirteen generations. Women also have land in their own right. They take a certain precedence, and may even become heads of phratries. Thus, while degraded enough in many ways, the feminine portion of the population have rights to which the women on Víti Lévu are strangers.<sup>3</sup>

In the latter island the patriarchate is dominant. The power of the father is not much inferior to the "*potestas patria*" of the Romans, except that, in some cases, when there has been a plurality of wives, descent was traced through the mother. This variation has been known to occur in Mbau.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. H. Codrington, "Melanesian Anthropology and Folklore," 1891, p. 47. *Vid.* also Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," regarding New Britain, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Brown believes in a Negrito substratum throughout Melanesia *ibid.*, pp. 16-17. Dr. Rivers hints at an ancient Melanesian substratum in Fiji. "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, p. 232. Prof. Macmillan Brown argues for a fundamental negroid race throughout the Pacific. *Transactions of New Zealand Inst.*, 1911, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> On the general subject, A. M. Hocart's paper is most important. *Man*, 1915, p. 5 ff.

Vanúa Lévu is apparently linked, therefore, to Melanesia, since the latter is distinctly matriarchate. Víti Lévu, on the other hand, is connected with Polynesia, for the Polynesians are strongly patriarchate.<sup>1</sup>

Víti Lévu is the scene of the landing of the Fijian "Pilgrim Fathers," the descendants of whom, judging from their marriage customs, and the extraordinary respect in which many of their chiefs are held, became strongly Polynesian in their ideas.<sup>2</sup>

Vanúa Lévu, as will be shown later, is also the home of spirit-veneration, as distinct from ancestor-worship. The worship of multitudinous spirits is the correlative of the matriarchate, while ancestor-worship is the offspring of the patriarchate. A parallel to the spirit-worship on Vanúa Lévu is found in the New Hebrides, where spirit cults are strong, and everything that has "*mána*" (potens) is worthy of respect and worship.

There is one institution which is more or less prevalent throughout Fiji, viz., the "*Vásu*." The "*Vásu*" appears to point to the influence of the matriarchate society even upon the more distinctly Polynesian section of the community. When a woman marries out of her tribe, her child has the privilege of returning to her people and assuming ownership of anything

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," 1910, p. 39. Macmillan Brown, "Maori and Polynesian," 1907, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Basil Thomson's "marriage" theory ("The Fijians," p. 15) is hardly a complete explanation of this strong Polynesian tendency in Víti Lévu. I see no objection to the theory of direct immigration from the east.

portable which he may desire. A young boy will lead a party of his friends to his mother's native town for the purpose of making good his *Vásu* right. Upon such an occasion, if the lad were to lay his hands on an article, his companions would immediately take possession of it and transport it to the *Vásu*'s village.

In earlier days the custom was regularly observed ; and it was so deeply rooted that, when certain white men visited the islands and took women to sin, their crime was condoned on the plea that they were "*Vásu* of Heaven,"<sup>1</sup>—that is, they were the children of Heaven. It was, therefore, almost impossible to withhold the women from them.

The ceremonies of the "*Vásu*," however, were not all on one side. For when the child (the *Vásu*) was three or four days old the father made presents to his wife's relations, which took the form of *tambúas* (whales' teeth), *súlus* (clothing), and *kúmi* (printed native cloth). The gift was called in some parts the "*Vakambútumbutúi ni ngónè*." A similar offering is made on the tenth day after birth in Araga, Pentecost Island, with the difference that it is the relatives of the father, who, as substitutes for him, are the donors. Dr. R. H. Codrington says, with regard to this Melanesian custom, that the relatives of the father "lay upon the infant's head mats, and the strings with which pigs are tied, and the father tells them

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Smythe, "Ten Months in Fiji," 1864, p. 68. Also Dr. Seemann, "Viti," p. 305.

that he accepts this as a sign that, hereafter, they will feed and help his son. There is clearly in this a movement towards the patriarchal system."<sup>1</sup>

The latter statement might very well be applied to the "*Vásu*" of Fiji. The institution is probably the result of the clash between the patriarchate and the matriarchate. Dr. L. Fison incidentally shows that the conflict between the two systems did take place even in modern times in the history of the Wáinimála tribes and those called Kai Múairá.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the "*Vásu*," any Melanesian portion of the community would have held, like the people of Araga, that the children of a woman were the heirs of their maternal uncle's property. The right does not seem to be drastic in Fiji owing, probably, to a compromise with the Polynesian immigrants, which took place as the two races intermingled in marriage. The consequence was that the mother's children retained only a right to

<sup>1</sup> Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 230 f.

<sup>2</sup> Fison, "The Nánga," 1884, p. 4.

Mr. Hocart's well-reasoned article, p. 631, *American Anthropol.*, Oct.-Dec., 1915, does not seem to disprove this. If the food offered to "the deceased kinsmen of his mother" can only be taken by the "sister's son," the explanation given that he is the only one that can take it without harm from his kinsman's spirit leads one still to think a remnant of matriarchal dignity and influence to be present. Why did the *sister's* son claim this as his right, as against any other man of his mother's clan?

My theory that the *Vásu* right is a clash between the matriarchate and patriarchate as a corollary of marriage between two clans representing these two types explains the features of the custom of "*Vásu*" as given by Mr. Hocart in the *American Anthropologist*, pp. 641-2. Nevertheless, the emphasis laid by this authority on a probable religious association accounts for the persistence of the practice.

commandeer goods in the manner above-mentioned, while the father maintained his position by sending a present to compensate any supposed loss sustained by the maternal relatives of his son.

As further proof we may quote a tradition on Vítí Lévu of a time when the first *Vásu* was known in Veráta. If the story be true, then the nephew-right was non-existent before, and was really an accommodation to the matriarchal sentiment of the aborigines.<sup>1</sup>

Other indications of the union of Polynesian and Melanesian in Fiji are to be found in the language of the country. It is not proposed to deal at length with this branch of the question. There are some very common words, however, used in Fiji which are distinctly Melanesian, while others equally common are Polynesian, and clearly recognisable in varying forms of orthography. Of the former we may mention a few :—*mána*, *tína*, *táma*, *líma*, *wánga*, meaning magical power, mother, father, hand, and boat, respectively ; while *rongo*, *kumála*, *ndálo*, *raráma*, are Polynesian, meaning report, sweet potato, taro, light, respectively.

The high hereditary standing of the chiefs in parts of Fiji demands notice in this connection. As we shall need to go fully into this subject later, we only treat it briefly here. The chiefly class have in Mbau, Réwa, and Dhákaundróve, attained such a position that they are accustomed to treat their underlings and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. Brown thinks *Vásu* rights to be a remnant of the matriarchate. "Melanesians and Polynesians," pp. 40-42, 96.

men of no importance with contempt. Such a manifest sense of superiority attaches to their bearing that it would be difficult to mistake them.

In these days, the attitude of chiefs towards their people has been considerably modified by the interposition of the British Government. But the pride of descent is still plainly in evidence.

I myself had a novel experience in which I had a good opportunity of observing the inflated pride to which reference has just been made. A high chief was sitting in his house with some inferiors near him. Being new in the country, I inquired of him the meaning of the term "*kaist*" (common herd). The old man almost screamed his answer. "There," he cried, at the same time raising his bony old finger and pointing in scorn at the commoners beside him. They in their subservience did their utmost to bear the insulting action with composure, but it was evident that they felt the public humiliation keenly.

It is remarkable that the people on the coast, as a class, likewise despise the people of the interior, especially those of darker skin, holding themselves to be of more chiefly origin. It is common for a man with a dark skin to be called by the humiliating name of "*Kai Dhólo*."<sup>1</sup> Students of this question generally

<sup>1</sup> Inhabitant of the interior.

In his book quoted above, Dr. Brown says the inhabitants of interior Samoa are darker than those on the coast, p. 56. The difference between the coastal and the inland natives in respect to family usages (terms of address) is noted by W. H. R. Rivers. "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, p. 10. Also p. 488. This anthropologist sees, likewise, in the grating of *yanggóna* (instead of the Polynesian

agree that the darker people of the interior have in them the blood of a lower type of humanity, viz., the Melanesians ; while the lighter class have in their veins the blood of the superior Polynesians. And when a more intelligent class of people are thus placed by circumstances over their inferiors, we have just the soil in which the pride of the Fijian chieftain could thrive and flourish.

method) in Dhólo an indication of an ancient Melanesian culture, vol. ii, p. 247.

Generally, coastal natives in Oceania are lighter than the interior people, and of a superior race. G. A. Peat quoted in *Sci. of Man*, March, 1898, p. 41. Pritchard, in his "Polynesian Reminiscences," 1866, Appendix, p. 418.

## CHAPTER II

### CHILD-LIFE—GAMES—INITIATION CEREMONIES

THE advent of a child in Fijian Society is a fairly important occurrence, especially if the new arrival be a boy. There is a strong desire in the native mind for male offspring, which is a direct result of the despised position of women in the barbarous days of old. Happily, under the influence of Christianity, the status of the girl and woman is being made more tolerable. For example, the inveterate opposition to the better education of the girls is gradually giving way before the efforts of the missionaries and the advancing light of Christian civilisation.

The first ten days are the most important period of infantile life, and the greatest care, especially of the children of chiefs, was taken by the nurse. If the mortality is great amongst the Fijian children, it is largely due to ignorance of proper method rather than to dilatoriness on the part of the nurses. The children of the Mbáuan chiefs were nursed day and night during the period mentioned, the nurses taking over their tiresome duty in turns. The nursing is done with the aid of a stiff wicker mat, and the infant is never held in the arms as is a European child. Further, the Fijian



baby is placed on its back, and it stays there till it finds strength sufficient to turn itself—an occasion of great rejoicing on the part of parents and relatives.

An old woman of the tribe, often the grandmother, is usually requisitioned as midwife. Such an old woman follows strictly all the customs of her people, and, incidentally, refuses to allow a man near the house at the time of birth.<sup>1</sup>

The mother is well cared for in the sense that she is not expected to do any work for a long period after confinement, an advantage of which every Fijian woman avails herself, if circumstances permit. For the full space of those months a Kandávuan woman will not wash her hair, a filthy habit which European and other missionary workers oppose most strongly.

In the feeding of the children during the first two and a half years there is no rule. Whenever the child cries, the natural sustenance is forthcoming, a practice which cannot promote the well-being of the baby. If the natural sustenance fail, water from boiled taro and other vegetables is given as a substitute. The use of condensed milk is rapidly growing, as the article is becoming easily procurable and better appreciated. Old Fijians abominated the milk of the cow in every shape or form.

The most highly-valued birthday gift for a child is

<sup>1</sup> So in New Georgia and New Britain, *Vid.* Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," pp. 34, 36.

This is in harmony with the general rule throughout the world. William I. Thomas in his "Social Origins," 1916, p. 526.

the *tambúa*.<sup>1</sup> Other articles were, and are, gladly accepted. In Mba, when a new-born baby is taken for the first time to a house, a present is expected from the occupants.

A relic of the matriarchate is to be found in the island of Kandávu. The maternal grandmother has, in some clans, the privilege of adopting the first offspring of her daughter—a kind of compensation for the loss incurred by the clan when the mother of the child was given away in marriage.

As on all other important occasions of native society, the progress of the infant-life is marked by feasts. The two most important festivities are the “*Mbón-gitini*” (ten nights), and that which celebrates the self-turning of the child upon its mat.

A detailed account of the feasts attendant upon the birth of a child has been written by a Fijian.

“On the day of the birth, the father makes a feast for the relatives of the woman. The name of that feast is the ‘*Túnundrá*.’ After the feast certain women are appointed from among the relatives of the child’s father and mother to carry the child in their arms constantly for ten days, that it may not be put down. This custom is called the ‘*Kévèkévé*’ (*i.e.*, the carrying in arms). Some are appointed also to boil taro-tops for the mother. Then all the old women, and adult women in general, go to the house where the child is born, to sleep there until the tenth day; the name of this custom is the ‘*Módhémódhè*’ (*i.e.*

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX.

the sleeping). After the child is born, he is given to drink the juice of candle-nut fruit that he may vomit. . . . After vomiting, fully ripe cocoanut is chewed and the milk squeezed out of it, then a piece of *mási* (i.e., fine native cloth) is soaked in this and given to the child to suck. After this, a wet-nurse is sent for to suckle the child for four days, then it is put to drink to its mother ; if, at four days, the mother's breasts are still dry, the other will continue to suckle it till they are supplied.

“ After two days from the birth of the child, a dish of water is brought and a stone to be put in the water to warm it, to wash the flesh of the child ; a feast is then made for his washing, and it is called the ‘ *Távvundéki*.’ On the day the child is born, the relations begin preparing food by day and night, to be brought to the house where the child was born, as food for the ‘ *módhémódhè*,’ and the ‘ *kévèkévé*,’ until ten days and then the food-making ceases. . . . By day and night, the house is crowded with the sleeping women, and they sing songs and play games of throwing water over each other or other comicalities, during the ten days, a rejoicing for the new child which has been born. First-born children like this are called generally new children.

“ The women appointed to nurse are prohibited from taking up their own food. Another person puts their food into their mouths up to the end of the ten days. The mother of the child remains lying down and is wrapped up in a ‘ *Ngátu* ’ (i.e., a large kind of native

cloth) during the ten days. Her food must not be prepared with sea-water, but simply boiled in fresh-water, and the relish with it is taro-tops (that is, the stems of the taro leaves cut up and wrapped in the flower sheath of the banana and then boiled). It falls to the share of the taro-top-boiling women to make the food for the mother. She continues to 'drink' taro-tops for eight days, and then fish is baked for her. No man may enter at random into the house where the child has been born until after the ten days. If a man should enter carelessly, he will be fined, he will have to go and make a feast for the sleepers, to be his fine, or his *totóngi*. . . . When the tenth day arrives, the relations of both the father and mother prepare a feast called a feast of the tenth night. Some food is also prepared for the mother, the relish of which is fish. The relatives then spread mats and *ngátu* on the couch of the mother and spread others in the place for her to eat in. Then a *ngátu* is opened up tent fashion for the mother to be ornamented privately within. When she is dressed all the doors are opened, and all the food of the tenth day feast is taken into the house. When the relations are all inside the house, that is, the women, the *ngátu* is raised up and the mother of the child comes forth, and those in the house salute her, calling '*A sesevúra*.' The mother then repairs to the place for her to eat in. When she has eaten, the food of the feast is apportioned out, and the sleepers, the nurses, and the taro-top boilers then take their departure. Then some of the relatives remain to sleep

till the full hundredth day. A reed is stuck in the wall each day, or a knot tied in a string, to keep count of the days, so that there be no mistake in the count. When the hundredth day arrives, the father of the child prepares another feast called the feast of the hundred days. The mother then goes to bathe in the river, and when she returns from bathing, the feast is distributed and the relatives who have been sleeping in the house of the child take their departure. It is then permissible for the mother to stroll and go about, and to do light work about her house. The child is also allowed to be carried outside. And if a new child like this is taken into another house, the owner of that house will present a whale's tooth as his present on entering, as it has entered for the first time into the house. If he has not a whale's tooth he will promise a piece of land or a house site to be the property of the child. . . . The birth customs which I have told are only done for a new child, that is a first-born. If a brother is born the customs I have told will not be done, nor the feasts made, nor the property; he will be attended to by his father and mother and his grandmother." <sup>1</sup>

### GAMES.

#### *Veitingga.*

The great national game of Fiji was the casting of the reed spear. Undoubtedly, the original idea of the game was to develop the muscles necessary to

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1911.

drive with force the spear when the Fijians were fighting or fishing. Both acquisitions were equally indispensable in former days. The spear (*tingga* or *sai*) is a reed three or four feet long, on the end of which is attached a rounded piece of hard wood called the *tōa*, which is shaped somewhat like a thick cigar, and polished. A specially-cleared throwing-ground is usually to be found near any large town, and is perhaps one hundred and fifty yards long. The amount of accuracy required to make the improvised dart cover a hundred yards is amazing. Novices cause it to drop a dozen yards away at best, and then athwart the course, the reason being that the spear-head is greatly heavier than the reed to which it is attached, so that the slightest deviation from the right direction will cause failure. An expert holds the spear in his right hand with the index finger firmly pressed on the end of the reed. It is the index finger which gives the final impetus in the direction required. He who drives the *sai* farthest wins the game.<sup>1</sup>

### *Loto.*

I have seen a game played on a mat folded lengthwise. Each player has a number of the fruit of the *Wāldi* (*Entada Scandens*, Bth), which are like round bean seeds with flattened sides. In the game there

<sup>1</sup> *Pake*, a Sandwich Island game, is very similar to *Vetlingga*. Vid. Ellis, "Polynesian Researches," vol. IV, 197.

Mr. Hocutt states that the clans or tribes were pitted against one another, *Man*, 1914, p. 6.

are called "*Ai dhimbi*," and the object of the game seems to be to knock the opponent's *ai dhimbi* off the mat while keeping your own. Each time this is done counts one. The game requires more skill than at first appears, as one only of the bean seeds is placed at a time on the mat. For a good description of the *Lafonga túpè*, the Samoan facsimile, see Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 341. There, polished pieces of cocoanut shell were used as *ai dhimbi*.

### *Drawing the Reed.*

An interesting game is played at Kandávu, with a large number of reeds about a foot long. These are heaped promiscuously, and, as all the leaves are carefully taken off, it is most difficult to draw the pieces separately from the heap without causing a rattle or a collapse. Two players sit one on either side of the heap, and each has his turn when the other by clumsiness makes a noise, or brings about a fall of the reeds. The player who has most reeds wins the game. Much hilarity accompanies any careful attempt which results in the reeds tumbling down like a house of cards.

### *Hiding the Shell.*

This pastime is often the amusement of the girls. Two girls will sit on the sand of the beach. Between them seven small holes are scooped with the hand. The player takes up a double handful of sand, in which is hidden a tiny shell chosen beforehand, and throws

a little into each hole consecutively. At the same time her task is to cover the shell from view as it falls into one of the holes. Shrieks of laughter are heard if through bad play or bad luck the shell appears on top of the falling sand.

If the shell be properly hidden in one of the holes, the opponent must guess in which it has been placed. Should she guess aright, it then becomes her turn to throw.

### *A Dhéré.*

When a new boat visits a village for the first time, it is the custom in Kandávu for the children (usually the boys) to tie gifts to the ends of long poles. With the gifts, streamers are attached. As the new boat approaches the shore, one of their number comes to meet it and blows a conch shell as if in defiance. With that the crew shout, "*A dhéré, a dhéré,*" and leaping out, give chase. Everything tied to the end of the poles is their property when they capture it.

### INITIATION CEREMONIES.

The initiation ceremonies of the Fijian youth, given in this chapter, are those of the Wáimaróu clan, which is said to be the parent stock of the Fijian tribal tree. The ceremonies are now discontinued, but in former days they were a most important part of the life of the Wáimaróu clan. A male was not reckoned a man until he passed through them; a woman,



similarly, was nothing more than a young thing running about in the village until she had complied with the requirements of her people.

### *The "Vákamási."*

This ceremony is the occasion on which the youth is clothed in *mási*, or native cloth. As a boy he was quite nude, and therefore of no consequence in the clan.

The ceremony of *Vákamási* took place at the age of puberty, the parents, with the help of the members of the tribe, deciding the day. At the appointed time, the relations of the mother came into the village-square. Then the relations of the father, clothed in *mási* in lengths of ten fathoms apiece, appeared leading the youth (also clothed) to his maternal relatives. The process of "*Líwa mási*" (taking off the *mási*) was then proceeded with, which meant to unwind the cloth from their waists, and piling it up as a present before the maternal relatives. As the unwinding continued, the long piece of native cloth on each man was cut at a section which left sufficient decent covering for the body. Then, in the case of chiefs, a gift of a feast, with presents of pigs, was made, continuing for ten days. In pre-Christian days a high chief would initiate a war, in order to get a dead man as "*Kénai Dhói*" (relish).

### *The Circumcision.*

Two or three months after the *mási* had been assumed, a personage in the tribe, called the "*Vúmi-*

*kalóu*," whose duty it was, took several boys to a stream, or to the sea, and after cleansing, performed the operation of circumcision with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Then the incision was bound with the soft bast of the "*Loló*" (native fig), and *mási*. The boys were taken afterwards to a "*Mbúré*" (boys' native house)<sup>1</sup> specially set apart, and the word was passed round the village that the boys were "in *mbúré*." The message was immediately understood, and on the fourth night the parents set about offering presents to the *Vúnikalóu*, who made quite a good living out of the business. Every day, until they healed, the wounds were dressed by him.

It was a great day of rejoicing when the boys were released, for then they could do many things which were taboo before. For instance, they were not allowed previously to chew *yanggóna* for the chiefs' drink, or to make "*Vákalólo*" (Fijian pudding), or to marry. It was a custom, if an uncircumcised youth was called on to chew *yanggóna*, for him to say, "*Au sa sénga ni vúluvúlu*," which means, "I have not washed my hands." This statement would at once be recognised in its hidden meaning by the chiefs, and he would be driven from their presence.

On the day of rejoicing the boys first bathed, and a feast was prepared, called the "*Mangtiti ni yavóu*" (the feast of renewal?). Games were indulged in,

<sup>1</sup> In Malekula (N. Hebrides) the boys were secluded in the "*amil*" for ten days after the operation. W. H. R. Rivers, "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, p. 435."

much like tournaments, between the old and the young warriors. They were called the games of men, for spears were used freely in the combats, and sometimes caused the death of one or more of the new-made clansmen. This, it is said, was done in order to try the mettle of the initiated.

*The Vákatókayádha. (The giving of the name).*

At night, when the new clansmen were to receive their names, an exchange of gifts was made, and the *Vúnikalóu* arranged the gathering in which the ceremony was to take place. Before this auspicious time they had each borne a sobriquet by which they were known and called. The meeting for the giving of the true name was held in a house. The proceedings were as follow :—

Towards the end farthest from the door, two *Vúnikalóu* took up their stations on either side of the main post of the house, and with their backs against it, one looking in the direction of the door, and the other squeezed into the small space between the post and the wall-thatching. From them was spread a long piece of native cloth reaching as far as the doorway ; and, on the other side of this, the clan-members sat in their places, a man and a woman alternately.

In the meantime, the youths who were to receive their names had gone out into the woods, where they passed the time chanting some wild refrain. When

everything was ready in the house, the occupants loudly chanted the following :—

“ *Ndrau ni ngasáu, nda vésavesáu.*

*A———* (long-drawn Ah).

*Ndrau ni loló, nda tiko lo.”*

Leaves of the reeds, *vésavesáu*,

Leaves of the fig-tree, we keep silent.<sup>1</sup>

With that, all bowed down and lights were put out. A youth approached and was reported. He was told by all to finish the task before him. He thereupon walked down between the two rows of people, and according to the custom, struck the chest of the first *Vúnikalóu*. The latter asked—

“ Who is there ? ”

*Ans.*—“ I.”

“ What is your name ? ”

*Ans.*—“ Ko Ravúla.”

The first *Vúnikalóu* called to his companion who was standing behind the post—

“ He says his name is Ravúla.”

*Second Vúnikalóu.*—“ Let his name be Ravúla.”

*The Company.*—“ His name is Ravúla.

His name is Ravúla.”

Each youth passed through the ceremony until the whole party of them had received their names. The

<sup>1</sup> The couplet was commonly used by the young people of Fiji in a certain game. Two parties of children would call to one another. The first would chant, “ *Ndrau ni ngasáu, nda vésavesáu*,” imitating in the last word the sound of the reed when rustling. Then the other party would respond, at the same time pointing to the native fig-tree, “ *Ndrau ni loló, nda tiko lo*,” referring to the fact that those leaves make little noise in the wind.

young men were allowed to marry within a few months of this initiation.<sup>1</sup>

### *Initiation of Women.*

The corresponding ceremonies amongst the women were tattooing and the giving of the name.

At the age of puberty the fleshy parts of the thighs were tattooed by old female nurses. For this painful operation a thorn of the orange tree was used to puncture the skin,<sup>2</sup> and powdered charcoal moistened with water was rubbed into the wounds. A female was not considered a woman until she was tattooed. At the same time she began to wear the "*Liku*" (native loin-covering) fastened at the waist.

The name of the woman was given in exactly the same way as in the case of the young men, except that the two *Vúnikalóu* were replaced by two old female nurses.

The curious part about the ceremony of name-giving was that the recipient chose his or her own name.

<sup>1</sup> On entry to the secret society "*Igiét*," in New Britain, a new name is given. Dr. G. Brown, "*Melanesians and Polynesians*," p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> In San Cristoval the operation is performed with the sharpened bone of a bat's wing. Florence Coombe, "*Islands of Enchantment*," p. 232. "Tattooing of women is Melanesian." Rivers, "*Hist. of Melan. Soc.*," vol. ii, p. 437.

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGION

IN "Sartor Resartus," Carlyle makes Teufelsdröckh to say—"Wonder is the basis of Worship : the reign of Wonder is perennial, indestructible in man." Carlyle himself would be astonished, if he were alive, at the great lack of wonder in the Fijian mind. "Of admiring emotion, produced by the contemplation of beauty, these people seem incapable."<sup>1</sup> On a certain beautiful moonlight night I made reference to the sublimity of the scene to a native. His laconic reply was : "In what respect is it beautiful ?" If one were to go into raptures over the glories of the unsurpassed Fijian sunset as seen from some of the outlying islets, the Fijians would look with an amused and half-pitying expression upon their faces at such a curious specimen of humanity. The native will indeed admire cleverness and will click his tongue with surprise if he sees anything unusual or abnormal. His curiosity, too, is unbounded. He will notice, for instance, an uncommon species of butterfly if it happens to cross his path. But when all this is said of him, it is still true that the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Thos. Williams, "Fiji and the Fijians," Ed. 1884, p. 97.

Fijian is sadly deficient in the more complex emotion of wonder.

What particular emotion, then, became predominant in the religion of the Fijian people? To quote the Rev. Thomas Williams again: "A principle of fear seems the only motive to religious observances."<sup>1</sup> His beautiful land, set like an emerald in the Pacific, has been and is a land teeming with spirits, with evil powers capable of withholding good and doing harm.

But why should the Fijian thus develop along the line of fear? The answer is to be found in his history and past social life. If we follow Professor Macmillan Brown's theory of his origin, the Fijian's departure for his island home was compulsory. He knew what invasion meant, and he was a victim to the war-terror by night and day. Not mere love of adventure drove him in his canoe to seek new lands; but rather the advance of hostile and conquering hosts. That was long ago. Since then he has scarcely ever rested. Compelled by enemies, and daring and risking all, he came from island to island till he settled in these dangerous coasts. Fear was "bred in his bone." It is not wonderful, therefore, that fear came out in his religious life.

His social life, likewise, was never truly safe or happy. The raising of his chief's hand was death to him. The will of his lord might mean the ruin of his family, and he never knew when he was safe from assassination.

Scenes of the most horrible nature were daily enacted

<sup>1</sup> "Fiji and the Fijians," Ed. 1884, p. 97.

before his eyes ; in many such he took a prominent part. Similarly, the tribe to which he belonged could not know what rest or security was, and every sense was constantly on the alert to detect treachery on the part of hostile or even friendly tribes. The whole environment in which he moved, the whole system which governed his career, gave little guarantee for the preservation of either life or property.

All the circumstances which have been described, and others besides, have so acted upon the nervous constitution of the Fiji Islander that it has irresistibly developed along the line of fear. An old resident of these islands showed me a list of the different kinds of fear which was prepared for him by an intelligent native. There were no fewer than eleven kinds in all. Clearly, fear bulks largely in the Fijian life and character.

To satisfy myself I prepared some small statistics which vividly prove the true nature of the Fijian in this respect. I requested a body of native converts to Christianity, twenty-eight in number, to write down on paper the reason of their conversion. The following was the result. One was converted through reading Matth. xxv, 46, " These shall go away into everlasting punishment." One was changed by the influence of a fearsome dream ; three through being put in jail ; another was frightened by a policeman ; eleven gave as their reason a serious illness ; one was shipwrecked ; eight became Christians under the preaching of the Gospel. Five of the latter heard sermons preached from the above-quoted text, Matth. xxv, 46. One of



them listened to a discourse on the text, "The wrath of God abideth on him." Yet another was converted by the passage, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Only two grew up in the calmer knowledge of Christianity, and even they were largely under the dominion of fear in their religious experience. Since that inquiry made about ten years ago, I have come upon innumerable cases of a similar kind. One of the problems of Christian work amongst the people is to induce them to be governed by the higher motives and impulses of Christianity.

From these facts it should be clear that, at the present time, fear is inseparable from the Fijian nature, and that this fear is the result of his history and past social environment.

It is but natural, therefore, that he should project the same emotion into the unseen world. He cannot possibly conceive it (apart from tuition) as being peopled with spirits less terrible in their acts than his own chiefs. Indeed, they must, from the very mystery that enshrouds them, be even more terrible than the Fijian's earthly superiors. In addition, the constant attitude of his subliminal self towards the unknown causes the unseen to be filled with vague terrors that are the more fearful because they are undefined. Professor W. M. Davis speaks of an old plateau in British Guiana, two thousand feet high. The natives of the forested sides have never ascended the mountain, and they believe it to be peopled with fearful spirits.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. W. M. Davis, "Physical Geography," 1901, p. 152.

So it is in Fiji. Unfrequented spots are filled with denizens of a spiritual nature. They are all objects of dread to the native.

If a twig crackled in the woods, the Fijian would cast a leaf over his shoulder as an offering to placate the unearthly being which was supposed to be the unseen cause of the sound. On a voyage, omens were carefully noted, and nothing was trivial. "Their food is not more important," says the Rev. J. Carey. One man informed me that if he met a friendly spirit, his hair would stand up on end,<sup>1</sup> but if he met an unfriendly one he was sure that he would die of fright.

It has been shown that the Fijians are a mixture of the Melanesian and Polynesian races. We might expect, therefore that the peculiarities of the worship of either class would be found in the group. At the same time we should not anticipate that, after intermingling so long, the boundary lines of the two classes of religion would be very clearly marked. On a closer study of the Fijians, we shall find that our prognostications are correct.

But first, let us notice that there is no solar cult, except such as survives in myth. The Oceanic World is one in this respect.<sup>2</sup> It is even less so in Fiji than in the eastern Polynesian groups. Neither the sun

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to in A. M. Hocart's article, *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, 1912, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Macm. Brown, "Maori and Polynesian," p. 127. This author refers to "relics" of sun-worship as continuing obscurely in "unobserved corners of Polynesia."

Dr. Rivers connects the megaliths of Oceania with a sun-cult, "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, pp. 540, 579.

nor the moon strongly appeals to the Fijians. The starry heavens attract their attention to the extent that the principal constellations are noted, because of their likeness to familiar native objects. For instance, Orion's Belt and the adjacent stars of the same constellation are called "*Na Íri* (the fan). The likeness to a four-cornered Fijian fan is certainly striking. The Southern Cross is "*Na Nga*" (the duck), flying away from two hunters, the similarity being again clear. The Pleiades are likened to the fruit of the tree called the "*Tárawáu*" (*Dracontomelon sylvestre*), which hangs in clusters. The name of the Pleiades with some is the "*Sosotárawáu*," in which word the name of the tree is embodied. Another group of stars, the Hyades, is called "*Na Ládha*" (the sail) owing to its exact similarity to a Fijian canoe-sail. Aldebaran would shine in the right upper corner of such a sail. What is commonly called the "*Lóvo*" (the oven) corresponds to Corona Australis. The Fijian oven is a hole in the ground in which hot stones are laid with the food, on top of which a mound of earth is raised to keep in the heat.

There is nothing in all this of a religious character. The constellations were simply the chief guides to the ancient Fijian mariner when out of sight of land.

The Rev. T. Williams, in his book already quoted, says that large shooting stars are thought to be gods, and the smaller ones are the departing souls of men.<sup>1</sup> But it is probable that the idea is merely fanciful, and

<sup>1</sup> "Fiji and the Fijians," p. 74.

that no principle of worship or religion is involved therein. For the same reason, the Milky Way is sometimes called the "Pathway of the Spirits." Similarly, North-European myths treat it as the pathway of souls to Valhalla.

Connection with sun-worship may possibly be traced through another source, viz., the titles of the chiefs ; but this will be mentioned later in another place.

Of totem-worship there is also little trace. Several animals are looked upon with superstition, as among the natives of the New Hebrides. The shark, the turtle, and many of the larger fish were believed to be the homes of gods. The chief god of Mbéngga is a shark. In common with many other peoples, the Fijians give a good deal of superstitious reverence to the snake, and many spirits of the departed are supposed to appear as serpents. The men of Mádhuáta (Vanúa Lévu) have been known even in the present day when drinking *yanggóna* (kava drink), to take a bowl of the liquid and walk towards the end of the building, and there pour out a libation, at the same time uttering these words of address to a sacred shark—"This for thee." It is quite like a recrudescence of some old Greek libation of 500 B.C.

The names of some animals and fish as "*Nggio*" (shark) are favourite surnames for children ; also, when a child is born, in some places, a fowl or a pig is given to him to be his property, and to grow up with him. Clans, however, were not always distinguished by totem names, as they were often formed on another

principle.<sup>1</sup> Men were known as belonging to a certain clan without being possessed of a clan surname.

The owl is a very sacred bird at Mbatiki. The inhabitants believe that, if an owl comes into the village and alights on a house, it is a sure sign of the approaching death of a chief.

On Tailévu, all young men about twenty or twenty-five years of age used to be called in some tribes "*Vuáka ni Veikáu*," meaning "pigs of the woods," but not from any totemistic tendency. It was a term given to them in warlike days exactly in the same sense as when we speak of "lions in the fray."

Taking the evidence on the whole, we see that the totem was never developed in Fiji as, for example, in Australia or North America. Traces only of totemistic worship can be found in Fiji at the present time.

The religious life of the Fijian people is thus narrowed down to two departments, viz., Spirit-worship and Ancestor-worship. Of these two, let us first take Spirit-worship.

Fiji literally swarms with miscellaneous spirits. The tops of the hills, the gloom of the forests, the running streams and waterfalls, stones, capes, bays, and the ocean are crowded with them. The Fijian has perfect belief in Spirit-land, and he is in more or less constant rapport with it.

Some of the spirits believed in by the natives are

<sup>1</sup> De Marzan is quoted by Rivers as giving two groups of totems, one consisting of trees, and the other of animals, "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, p. 341. Dr. Rivers himself looks on totemism in Fiji as "greatly modified," "Hist. of Melanesian Society," vol. ii., p. 369.

tiny, e.g., the "*Luvè ni wai*," or "Children of the Waters" (water kelpies). They are supposed to be good dancers, which belief is probably a poetic reference to the long lines of breakers that move forward and recede as Fijian men do in a native dance. The music of the breaking waves on reef or shore would add to the reality of the conception.

Other spirits are so large that, when they stand in the forests, they overlook the tops of the trees ; or, if they tread on the bed of the ocean, are head and shoulders above the waves, like Orion the mighty hunter of Aryan mythology.

Then there are others again, like *Ndakuwángga* the god of Mbéngga, who can change themselves into any shape imaginable.

*Ndaudhina* is a generic name, possibly for the Will-o'-the Wisp, who appears as a fiery face, after the manner of the Afiti witches or fire-carriers in Central Africa. This spirit is generally known throughout Fiji and has been classed by the Rev. J. Waterhouse as a god.<sup>1</sup> There is a similar belief in fiery spirits at Santa Cruz, New Hebrides, where men say they see ghosts like fire in the woods. The number of *Ndaudhina* is legion, and the name means "always shining."

Winds are called princesses in some parts, and they are given the title of a Fijian woman of rank. In other localities they are looked upon as caused by large birds flying through the air. For instance, the east wind (*dhángi tókáláu*) is supposed in Kandávu to be

<sup>1</sup> "Kings and People of Fiji," 1866, p. 362.

the pulsing of the air as the great "*Mánumánu ni Singalévu*" (creature of the midday) passes by. In these days this belief has become a poetical personification of nature powers, but formerly had a superstitious belief in wind spirits as its basis.

Some of the spirits in Fiji are widely known, others are parochial. Some are male and some female. Crude, horrible stories are told of some, whilst of others we hear pretty, romantic tales, as for instance of a goddess, who with her retinue of maidens bathes daily in the waterfall at Vúya.<sup>1</sup> Or it may be that a tree or a rock is the usual abiding place of the spirit, and woe be to him who should desecrate the sacred spot. One of my boys dared to cut off a branch of a haunted tree some time ago. On the following morning two of his fowls lay dead near by. The boy is not to be convinced that the spirit inhabiting the tree had nothing to do with the death of the poultry.

It is most important to note that in few cases has this spirit-cult developed into anything like a fixed ritual, and seldom has there arisen a priest who should regularly mediate between spirit and people. The cult is consequently intermittent, and is suggested to the individual by danger or some other special circumstance.

One class of spirits deserves careful notice, viz., the *Lúvè ni wai*, because the cult (if we may call it so) is somewhat better organised than the others. We have incidentally noticed the numerous *Lúvè ni wai* on

<sup>1</sup> Mbúa. The name of the goddess is "*Léwatangáu*."

page 32. They have, in addition to their dancing powers, the special property of making a man invincible in battle, besides being able to bestow many other advantages. The *Vútu*, the man whose duty it is to carry on the ceremony, generally comes from *Mádhuáta*, which is a province of *Vanúa Lévu*, the stronghold of spirit-worship in Fiji.

The *Vútu* received gifts as a reward for causing a man to be invulnerable in battle. He was also the chief figure in connection with the *Lúvè ni wai* guild, or secret society, whose members met together for mutual help and advantage.<sup>1</sup> The society assembled at night, a fact which suggests the remnants of an old cult that was relegated to the lower regions in the days of Polynesian immigration. The following is a description of one of their meetings told to me by an old Fijian. It is the nearest approach to ordinary spirit-rapping that one could well find.

First an offering of *yanggóna*, the national drink, is made to the *Vútu*; after which the whole company sit down in perfect darkness. The *Vútu* beats here and there upon the floor or wall with a native axe. A voice is heard saying "The spirit is coming," and then another voice, presumably that of the approaching spirit, says, "I have your knives and money." The company ask, "Where?" The place being indicated,

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the organisation is less complex, and less beneficial to Society in general, than either the *Tamate* or the *Sukwe* societies of Banks' Isl. Rivers, "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," 1914, vol. i, p. 128. It is a parasite society.



an edge of a mat is lifted, and lo ! there lies the money or the knife.

If one is being initiated into the guild a hand is stretched out in the darkness and grasps the candidate. It is supposed to be the hand of the spirit appearing. Variations of the above ceremony are, of course, to be found in the group. It may be said that detailed information of the inner organisation of the society is most difficult to obtain. Secrecy is one of its most characteristic features.

The innocent are beguiled into the society of the *Luvé ni wai* in hope of wealth ; but often they are disappointed, for the leader uses the organisation to promote his own personal ambitions. Still, the ostensible object of the craft is mutual and material progress, the imparting of knowledge, etc. Of late it has developed into a secret patriotic society which opposes the presence of all foreigners in Fiji. The guild is not so highly organised as the *Duk Duk* society<sup>1</sup> of New Britain, neither does it use intimidation to so great an extent to gain its ends. Priestcraft and superstition form the two main weapons of its devotees.

Members are said to be "*Tamáta ndína*" (true men). A curious fact should be noted that members guilty of lying are punished by the society which is itself the very mother of lies.

When a man is obsessed, or rather possessed, by the *Luvé ni wai*, he can, so it is said, be struck in the

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of this is given by Dr. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians." pp. 60 ff.

abdomen with an axe and yet remain invulnerable. I myself have spoken to a man who, in his heathen days, was believed to have been proof against the bullets of the Government troops.

In the Banks' Island, men possessed of spirits eat fire, lift enormous weights, and execute feats of agility.<sup>1</sup> Similarly in Fiji, so complete is the belief that it is necessary to have the aid of water kelpies to do wonderful things, that, even at the present time, numbers of the natives think, and actually assert, that circus acrobats<sup>2</sup> in European countries are in league with the spirits of the waters.

In respect of spirit-land in Melanesia, Dr. Codrington states in his book that "there does not appear to be anywhere in Melanesia a belief which animates any natural object, a tree, a waterfall, stone, or rock, so as to be to it what the soul is believed to be to the body of man."<sup>3</sup> Fiji and Melanesia are alike on this point. Spirit-land is in a continual state of change, and definite features are hard to delineate. Spirits wander, fly, frequent, or haunt, as their caprice suggests, or rather as the imagination or superstitions of men run riot.

Altogether we should probably do right to couple, as being related, the belief in multitudinous spirits in Fiji with the spirit-cult of Melanesia. The difference is that, in the latter, the whole religious life of the people

<sup>1</sup> Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Since writing this I find that Mr. A. M. Hocart has made the same observation. Paper on "*Kalou*," *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, 1912, p. 447.

<sup>3</sup> Codrington, *ibid.*, p. 123.

is practically confined to spirit-worship,<sup>1</sup> whereas, in Fiji, as we shall find, another cult has been superimposed by immigration, viz., that of organised ancestor-worship.

The origin of the great mass of spirit-life is difficult to trace, but two sources may be safely suggested. (1) The effect of the animistic tendency of the native mind towards nature is a very real source. Dr. L. Fison is quoted by Dr. R. H. Codrington as saying that all Fijian gods are ghosts, that is, spirits of the dead. But there are whole classes of spiritual beings, such as water kelpies, for instance, which are generally understood to be nature-spirits throughout the world; and there are likewise in Fiji legions of woodland beings and tree-spirits which could not possibly come under the category of ghosts. They are the offspring of the native imagination. (2) Also we may safely say that many spirits owe their existence to the unusual appearance of rock or tree. Sir A. Lyall's words are important in this connection. He says that the primitive worship of stones in India is due to that "simple awe of the unusual which belongs to no particular region." The emotion indicated by him has not reached the point of wonder. Many cases of this branch of animism might be cited in Fiji. The following illustrations will suffice. Two large rocks standing together at Lakémba,

<sup>1</sup> "It is thoroughly in accordance with my scheme of Melanesian history that in Southern Melanesia it should be the cult of ghosts which requires looking for, while the cult of spirits is the prominent and obvious feature of the magical and religious rites."—Rivers, "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol. ii, p. 419.

are said to be a god and goddess who have done wrong and are, therefore, changed to stone. At Kandávu, there is a huge mushroom-shaped rock called Sólórémba which is said to be the home of a spirit.

Nature-worship, however, does not account for all spirits. There are regular additions to the spirit-throng by deterioration of ancestor-worship. When a man dies leaving children behind him, they remember him and make him offerings. If there are no children the clan cannot take up the children's duty, but it recognises the place of burial. The sanction of " *Támbu* " (taboo) keeps it inviolate. No man will wantonly desecrate the place, nor cut down trees growing there. If anyone were to intrude carelessly, and his child, for example, were to become ill soon after, the Fijians would argue concerning his misfortune according to the logic of *post hoc, propter hoc*, and say that the child sickened because of his father's sacrilege. The only course open to the father would be to " *Sóro* " or make amends by giving *yanggóna* to the elders of the tribe. Gradually the remembrance of the dead would fade as his immediate friends passed away, but the sanctity of the spot would, to some extent, cling to it. It would be a haunted place. Thus the soul of a man may tend to deteriorate into an ordinary spirit frequenting a woodland copse. This was a retribution all too terrible for a Fijian to contemplate ; hence his dread lest he should leave no family behind him to save his name from passing into swift oblivion.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANCESTOR-WORSHIP

IN turning to ancestor worship we must refer to the classification of gods made by the Rev. Thos. Williams. He says there are two classes—the *Kalóu Vu* (real gods) and *Kalóu* (ghosts). But, in truth, there is no difference of kind between the two classes mentioned by him. There is a difference only of degree. Let us take, for instance, Ndengéi, the so-called chief god of Fiji. He is a real god in the sense in which Mr. Williams uses the term. Yet there is nothing surer, if we may follow tradition, than that he is a “*Yálo*” or ghost; and that he was once a chief, who, in company with Lútunasómbusómbu, was an early immigrant to Fiji. This is stated definitely and generally in the legends of the people.

As another illustration let us refer to Tanóvu, the god of Óno. Tanóvu is expressly asserted by his own devotees to have been a man<sup>1</sup>; and at the same time

<sup>1</sup> So A. M. Hocart with respect to all *Kalóu Vu*. *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* 1912, p. 445. I heartily agree with Mr. Hocart that *Kalóu* in general are the “dead.” *Vid. ibid.*, p. 448. That nature spirits have coalesced with them is the result of the weakness of the native mind in discrimination.

they call him their "*Kalóu Vu*" (lit., God-Origin). The name *Kalóu Vu* gives the clue to the solution of the question, and this will be made clearer in a later chapter.

But it should be well noted here that, in Fijian ancestor-worship, there is a general and special aspect, which latter becomes a cult of particular and superior ghosts. (For the latter see below, p. 35 ff.)

With regard to the ordinary nature-spirits, offerings made to them were widespread, yet were only presented by individual men, or parties of men, on special occasions. The usage, therefore, depended upon whim or caprice, and consequently was desultory. This does not mean that the offerings were seldom made. On the contrary, gifts were fairly frequent. One writer informs us that, in a certain place, a large heap of leaves had collected, being thrown there by travellers who feared the spirits residing in the place. There was no fixed rule, however, by which the offering was determined.

In ancestor-worship, on the other hand, there is rather more order maintained. It is the bounden duty of the children to supply the departed relative with food and to present him with offerings of various kinds. In former days, food was placed in the grave itself; and, even at the present time, so I am informed, a grave has been supplied with biscuits, as at Yaurávu, or with cooked bananas, as at Ngau. Amongst the Wainimála tribes (Víti Lévu), a special enclosure, called "The Nángga," was often used for presenting these

gifts to the ancestral ghosts.<sup>1</sup> Wives considered it their right and duty to visit the grave and commune there with the spirit of the departed husband, weeping and appealing to him to reveal the cause of death. Witchcraft was supposed to be detected in this manner. Ancestor-worship of this simple type is also found in Melanesia.<sup>2</sup>

As to the origin of ancestor-worship, it is usually contended that dreams are the cause of the belief in the future existence of relatives. A man who sees the form of the dead in a dream is said to be prepared to accept the existence and reality of the departed soul. And again, he who himself travels in his dream is quite ready to believe the statement that he actually left his body, and experienced, for the time being, the life of the spirit. This is true of the Fijian.

Further, every Fijian has come to think that he will live beyond the grave. A very human custom has arisen therefrom and is practised constantly among the islanders when a man is about to die ; it is the "*Tatáu*" or bidding farewell.<sup>3</sup> To omit this solemn little ceremony in olden days was considered a calamity. During the procedure the dying man gave directions as to what should be done with his personal effects ; he then usually added as a kind of warning to his relatives the words : "And I will be with you." Since the Fijians have become Christianised they still

<sup>1</sup> Dr. L. Fison, "The Nánga," p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> The same farewell is customary in Tahiti, and was known as the "*tutu*." Ellis, "Polynesian Researches," vol. iii, 115.

think it a bad sign if a person dies without a proper farewell.

It is narrated of Ndengéi, the chief god, that when he was about to die, he turned the farewell phrase into a threat of oppression. "I will be with you to trouble you," said he. Threats and curses were common enough on death-beds. A comparatively recent case of cursing occurred to my knowledge at Nambúkelévu, Kandávu.

All this tended to confirm in the religious practices of the natives what is known to us as ancestor-worship. The memory of a solemn vow, request, or curse would be exceedingly vivid in the Fijians' imagination, and, indeed, would become almost a voice to intimidate them, sounding from the other world. A very real conviction sprang up in their minds that, if they did not attend to the will of the dead man, the latter would assuredly be able to make the survivors suffer for their negligence.

Gradually the system of ancestor-worship became elaborate. To-day there are mysterious paths along the tops of the highest ranges in Fiji, all leading backwards to the place from which, according to legend, the people drifted in days gone by. The Fijian of the present period believes that the spirits made the paths. It is patent, however, that the larger trees were cut down in ancient times for the benefit of the dead, and, perhaps, for the more practical purposes of warfare. Thus the home-sickness of the Fijian "Pilgrim Fathers" has wrought itself into the super-



stition of the race. The pathway is called the "*Sála ni Yálo*," that is, the pathway of the spirits.<sup>1</sup>

The ghosts of men climb from their villages along the nearest spur until they reach the top of the range, whence they speed away to the place from which they leap into the sea. At one point in Kandávu, called in Fijian *Nainggóro*, there is a rock which is supposed to be the canoe that ferries the dead on their way. In former times it was a custom for young cocoanuts to be placed two and two for chiefly souls to drink while *en route*. Food also was prepared for them as they passed to the lands of the blessed.

But here we meet with a difficulty. The souls speed away to the blessed abode, yet they remain. The problem is not to be solved by saying the native believed that the reflection of the man goes to heaven and that his shadow remains. Such an explanation would be an afterthought in primitive philosophy. We must go further back in the mental experience of the natives and discover more simple elements in their ideas. The true explanation is to be found in the law of association. After the body has been buried, the mental make-up of the survivor forces him to believe that the dead man is still there. Hence, as we have seen, the spot becomes sacred. But, again, the survivor sits in his house and hears the tropical hurricane raging without,<sup>2</sup> he sees his house rocking with the

<sup>1</sup> For a good account *vid.* Thomson's, "The Fijians," p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> The thought of the weather as affecting the dead caused the natives to build houses over the graves. A. M. Hocart, *Journ. Anth. Inst.* (1912), p. 448.

force of the tempest, and he cannot believe that the soul of his father is out there near the grave, exposed to the fury of the elements. He, therefore, almost unconsciously, constructs a heavenly home for him where he will be safe and at ease. Thus probably arose a belief in the two souls. The barbarian then explains this conception of two souls by saying that the reflection of the dead has gone to the spirit-land, and the shadow remains at the place of burial. A similar idea is to be found in Santa Cruz, where the souls go to the great volcano Tamami, are burnt, renewed, and stay there ; yet they are most certainly seen in the bush at Santa Cruz by night.<sup>1</sup>

Souls liberated from the bondage of the body are not the same as they were in life ; for they are endued with higher powers. They come to have a special capacity for doing either good or evil. Thus, if relatives wanted a favour from their dead, they were accustomed to visit the grave, and, after proffering gifts in Fijian fashion, make the request.

Likewise, it was customary for a man to go to the place of burial and sit there for a time offering presents, after which he would return to the village obsessed by his sire, and would challenge anyone to slash him with a knife or an axe. He believed himself invulnerable. After such an exhibition, it was generally easy to get from his fellow-natives what he coveted in the way of food, clothes, etc. In this case, spirit-worship and ghost-worship are not far from one another.

<sup>1</sup> Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 264

From the foregoing, we infer that filial affection is not the root principle of ancestor-worship in Fiji. There is more of "*Do ut des*" in religious devotion paid to dead forbears, just as "*Do ut abeas*" is more dominant in ordinary spirit-worship. Whatever of filial affection may linger in the heart of the survivor, it tends to be submerged in the fear of a supernatural being who is looked upon as being more and more potent to wield supernatural instruments. Departed souls become more and more identified with that fearful other world, and they take on the character of dispensers of evil to all who thwart their wishes. In short, they become gods; and, as a clue to the general conception in Fiji of their character as gods, it may be cited that the chiefs in Dhákaundróve were deified before they were dead, their principal claim to apotheosis being their most inhuman cruelty. The cruel man was the prospective god.

The key-stone of Fijian ancestor-worship is found in the *Kalóu Vu*. The *Kalóu Vu* is the Abraham of the clan or tribe, and tends to become its official deity.<sup>1</sup>

The *Kalóu Vu*, being the originator of the clan, was always a chief. When he died, he was revered as the *Vu* or beginning of the clan, and corresponded very closely to the Semitic patriarch. Later, his memory became so revered that he was constituted the patron god of the clan. His deeds were lauded and

<sup>1</sup> Compare Thomson, "The Fijians," p. 5, also A. M. Hocart, *American Anthropologist*, Oct.-Dec., 1915, p. 638. Also *Journ. Anth. Inst.* (1913), p. 102

magnified, and recorded in song, and the fear of his power daily increased. Men gathered in after years on the village green or on the war canoes, to talk of days when the clan-hero lived. Myths and legends clustered around his name until he became a true culture-champion. New material was found and readily fitted into the story. The *Kalóu Vu* gradually became the central figure of a world of myth, legend, and miracle, which position an ordinary spirit of the woods or sea could never achieve.

When the clans became too numerous to live in one place, new clans formed and broke off the parent stock, each with its own chiefly leader. This leader, in his turn, might become the deity of his people. But in the creation of many such minor *Vu*, the honour of the original *Kalóu Vu* increased, and he was raised in dignity (if the separate clans cohered in policy and interest) to be the god of a composite tribe. As an excellent illustration of this development from clan-*Vu* to tribe-*Vu* we quote the case of Tanóvu at Óno, whose story we give in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### ANCESTOR-WORSHIP—*continued*

#### TANÓVU, THE *KALÓU VU* OF ÓNO, KANDÁVU

ON the face of a cliff in the Island of Óno, there is a gigantic footprint four feet long and more than a foot wide. The indent of the great toe is almost perfect, and the whole appearance is suspiciously like the handiwork of man.

On the face of a cliff upon the opposite shore in Kandávu there is another footprint, also gigantic in scale.

These two marks were said in olden times to have been made by Tanóvu, a clan-leader in the days of immigration. The legend goes that the strait between the islands of Óno and Kandávu was not wide enough to suit Tanóvu, for it was too narrow to allow of his dipping the great "*Kitu*" (water-pot) into the sea. He, therefore, placed one foot on Óno and another on Kandávu, pushing them apart till the passage became three or four miles in width. The object of Tanóvu's herculean task was that he might with ease dip his enormous "*Kitu*" into the water. As was his custom, one day he was filling his water-vessel, and so mighty was the stream which rushed in that a huge canoe

filled with warriors from Naidhómbodhómbó in Vanúa Lévu, was sucked in. But, strange to say, the god knew not that anything untoward had happened until the owner of the canoe, anxious on account of its long absence, came searching for his property. Then the giant was fain to confess that he had seen some little rubbish floating into his *kitu* when he went to dip water: In a most accommodating fashion, he opened the bottle or pot, and lo! there was heard the hum of voices, there too was seen the canoe tacking backwards and forwards on the surface of the water.

The foregoing is a story which the natives of Óno never tire of telling. It is like "Jack and the Beanstalk" to their vivid imagination. While they delight in these fantastic legends, they pride themselves that Tanóvu was not only big and wonderful, but that he was able also to do, and actually accomplished, some very useful public works.

The old story has it that the central part of Óno was too low, much lower by contrast than Nambúkelévu (Mt. Washington), which was situated on the opposite island of Kandávu. There dwelt on Nambúkelévu a veritable spirit of Vesuvius, called Táutáumoláu. Tanóvu, being jealous of the high mountain in which the rival spirit resided, resolved to build up a mountain fort in the centre of his own island. He did so, and the mountain is now named "Nggilái Tangáne." The manner in which he accomplished this tremendous task is as follows:—

Tanóvu had two wives who, in a spirit of rivalry,

dug great masses of earth from deep gullies (still to be seen near Nám bouwálu), and raised their fort called "Nggilái Yaléwa" to a height somewhat above "Nggilái Tangáne." The pride displayed on this occasion by his own wives was very humiliating to the stern old *Kalóu Vu*, and roused his anger to such an extent that, with one kick of his mighty foot, he knocked the top off the mountain which his wives had been raising. He, thereupon, set himself to build up his own mountain at the expense of the rival spirit in Nambúkelévu. So then, having placed his warriors on a hill thirty minutes' walk from Vambéa to watch for his return, he made a furtive descent upon his enemy's mountain. Once there, he began to dig out the earth from the crest of it, and to fill his huge wicker basket.

While thus engaged, Táutáumoláu saw him and made all haste to save his ancient home. Upon which Tanóvu muttered: "*Sa vúra mai ko ka*," in the dialect of Óno, which being interpreted means, "Here he comes." Now this saying was highly taboo in Óno until recent times. He was counted an evil character who should report a coming visitor by the words "Here he comes."

The god, having taken the alarm, snatched his basket of earth and fled before his foe. The chase went sometimes along the great southern reef, and sometimes along the spirit path of Kandávu.

Táutáumoláu was joined in the pursuit of Tanóvu by the god of Tavúki, and also by the god of Yálè.

And in the zigzag running which resulted from such an unequal struggle much earth fell out of Tanóvu's basket, forming the many islands now to be seen dotting the lagoon within the reef on the ocean side of Kandávu.

The chase continued even unto Nainggóro. Tanóvu had, perforce, to speed thence as far as Sólo. From Nainggóro, there was only one pursuer, however, for the spirits of Yálè and Tavúki grew weary in the race, and desisted.

The dropping of earth continued as Tanóvu frantically jerked his basket along. Hence we have the pretty island of Ndravúni, and the rest of those romantic little islets to the north-east of Óno, celebrated amongst the Fijians as the home of the turtle.

But there must come an end to all things, and Tanóvu arrived at last at the end of the reef. At Sólo he began to descend into the deep, and terror of the Kandávu Channel gat hold of him. He be-thought himself that it was time to change his tactics. Therefore, retaliating upon the pursuing deity, he cried out in stentorian tones : " Turn, ye sons of Óno." And the battle turned once more towards Kandávu, Tanóvu this time being the pursuer, but not before Tanóvu had dropped his basket at Sólo ; and so we have the circular reef and the rock in that place to this day.

It is at this juncture that the Óno minstrel waxes warm and enthusiastic as he tells the story ; for does not their champion show himself true flint at the



crisis of the conflict? The battle having turned to Kandávu, Táutáumoláu was there brought to bay below Tilíva and above Nakásaléka. It must have been an awesome sight when the giant of the extinct volcano actually hid himself behind the headland from his unrelenting foe. The latter stood on a ledge of rock which the writer has visited. There are to be seen distinctly the footprints of Tanóvu's feet (much smaller than those on the cliffs) and the mark of his spear, as he held it on end before him in challenge to Táutáumoláu. Tanóvu then made his great and renowned thrust, and the proof of his godlike prowess is, that the headland behind which Táutáumoláu lay hid was pierced through by the spear of Óno's hero. The *dénouement* of the duel seems to be that Tanóvu was victorious, and a "*Mangiti*" (gift of food) was sent to him from Nambúkelévu in token of the fact. The *mangiti* took the form of "*Mandrái vúndi*" (plantain bread) and a pig. This particular kind of native bread was made exceptionally well by the people of Nambúkelévu, and, when ready, was cut up into large pieces almost the size of kerosene cases. When presented to a chief it was the custom to pile it up in heaps like stacks of boxes. Part of the *mangiti* in question never reached Óno, but was delayed half-way up near Malowai, where it now stands petrified. On top may be seen the pig in the form of a rounded rock of larger size. The place is called "*Sólomandrái Vúndi*" (rock plantain bread). From this circumstance there is a

Fijian joke. For, when no "*Kénai dhói*" (flesh food) is forthcoming at a feast the youths gibe each other by saying: "Go to Sólomandrái Vúndi for the '*Kénai dhói*.'" One portion of the gift actually arrived at Óno, and it may be seen in the shape of rocky strata near Núkuloá.

Such then is the story of Tanóvu in which is recorded the many serviceable acts rendered by him on behalf of posterity. If we now turn to more local legends we may find other traces of this grand old personality of Óno. His army is still to be seen and wondered at, as it crowns the height thirty minutes' walk from Vambéa. The men-at-arms are rocks like the boulders in glacial deposits. From a distance they look somewhat like an army on watch. Until ten years ago, a single boulder was caught in the fork of a "*Nókonóko*" (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) tree on the summit of the ridge. It was the sentinel who was set to look for the approaching battle between Tanóvu and Tautáumoláu. At the time already mentioned, the tree was blown down by a strong wind. But the adamantine watchman has not perished with the lapse of years. He lies amongst his fellows.

Near to the army, are two conical mounds. I climbed to the top of one and found that, though very large, it was of a symmetrical shape; and the other was flattened somewhat on one side. These are the ground-ovens which were in the process of baking while the army kept watch. The legend is that one had been opened; for, in that oven which,

was flat on one side, the food was properly cooked. But, before the second was ready, the fight came swiftly and intercepted the culinary operations. There is an interesting addition to the story. It is asserted by some that the oven in which the food was cooked was filled with “*Úvi*” (yams), “*Ndálo*” (taro), and the rest of the edible roots and fruits of Kandávu and Ono. Wherefore they are edible at the present time. The other “*Lóvo*” (ground-oven) was filled with many kinds of roots and fruits which, being uncooked, have become the poisonous roots and fruits in the island unto this day. In the locality of the ovens, is a large leafed plant called “*Ai tutúvi i Tanóvu*” (oven cover). It grows in no other place in Ono and is supposed to be the shrub, the leaf of which was used in the packing of the ovens before mentioned.

There is the oven, and there is the shrub used in the oven. Where is the “*Sanggá*” (pot) of Tanóvu? It is a rock near Lewéti, and is peculiarly like a Fijian *sanggá*. It was intact until recently, when some Ndravúni women broke off the mouth of it. Wherefore the Ndravúni women are much to be blamed.

But a more wonderful stone lies in the bay not far from Nárikóso. It is a rock with a curious hole in it, and the legend is that if you point at this hole, Tanóvu will send fierce storms upon the land. Consequently, if any town in Ono had an especially welcome visitor, the inhabitants were accustomed to point at this rock in order to bring a strong wind and so prevent the visitor's departure. I have undoubted proof that there

are men in Ōno to-day who very much respect this potent stone.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding inland, we find that Tanóvu was not always surefooted, for at Ndawáni do we not find his slide? It is an unusual formation. A deep mark is scored in the side of a ridge, and, passing down the slope, cuts through the top of the adjacent ridge. I find no evidence that Tanóvu was playful, so I presume that he accidentally stumbled and fell. The name of the slide is "*Ai titindára nei Tanóvu*" (the slide of Tanóvu).

While we are inland, we notice that part of the island is bare of forest trees. Now who else could have caused the phenomenon but Tanóvu? And, according to the native version, it is very clear that he was the cause of it. If anyone disbelieves this, the very place is pointed out, called "*Révu ni masáwi*," where Tanóvu had been baking "*Vasili*," a kind of colouring for native puddings. Tanóvu went to bathe, carelessly

<sup>1</sup> The following observation made by Mr. A. M. Hocart in the *Revue Internationale d'Ethnologie*, 1911, p. 727, describes a very similar practice of the natives of Lakémba with regard to a stone situated between Yanrana and Vakano.

"Emosi n'est qu'un homme d'âge mûr, mais il est doté d'une mémoire formidable, où sont accumulées une masse de traditions. Il accuse le seigneur de Tumbou d'ignorance crasse et raconte ce qui suit: Cette pierre a deux esprits (tevoru), l'un nommé Tui Tarukua (Seigneur de Tarukua) est mâle et hante le récif au passage de Vunikau; l'esprit femelle, Dhakaunggeva, habite au passage de Lotoi de l'autre côté de Tumbou. Si des jeunes filles venaient en visite de l'étranger, et que les jeunes gens voulaient prolonger leur séjour, ils allaient frapper la pierre et prier l'esprit femelle de produire une crue qui retarda leur départ; si d'autre part des jeunes hommes venaient passer quelque temps à Lakemba et plaisaient aux jeunes filles, celles-ci allaient faire la même requête à l'esprit mâle.

leaving the “*Révu*” (word for ground-oven in Óno). Some of the “*Nggiláiso*” (coals) started a fire which spread far and wide, and was only stopped by the hero himself. Wherever the fire went, there did the forest trees cease to grow.

The most interesting relic of all remains to be discussed. Tanóvu was an ancient axe-grinder. That is, he was in the habit of grinding stone-axes, many of which can still be found in the villages. And we have Tanóvu’s sharpening-stone with which he did his work. I have seen it for myself, and can vouch for the implicit belief of the natives that it is actually the sharpening stone of their tribal god. It is a huge rock, several tons in weight, lying overturned near a stream in a gully ten minutes’ walk from Vambéa. As one approaches it, one finds nothing remarkable in its appearance. But, on looking underneath, one sees that it was a veritable sharpening-stone, ground out in huge scallops, defying a master mason to do them better. The spaces between the scallops were grooved very nicely, and the whole surface appeared as if it were the work of one man. In earlier days, great “*Mangiti*” (feasts) used to be brought to the stone, especially in war-time, in order that the help of the great spirit of Tanóvu might be invoked on behalf of his posterity. Religious axe-grinders in very truth !

Tanóvu also was a slinger, and his slingstone, most beautifully rounded, still lies in the town of Vambéa to be admired by lovers of anthropology.

And now, before I introduce Tanóvu himself, I will

relate how he acted towards the "*Kaká*" (a parrot), and the tree called the "*Ndálindáli*."<sup>1</sup>

The parrot named above annoyed the god with his raucous screech. In a fit of rage the latter took upon him his mighty strength, and, tearing up a *ndálindáli* tree, flung it after the *kaká*. Consequently Tanóvu did for Óno in respect of the *ndálindáli* trees what St. Patrick did for Ireland in respect of the snakes; he exterminated them. And if you take *kaká* or *ndálindáli* to Óno to-day, they will without exception die away.

On the ocean-side of Óno, high upon a mountain, stands a hoary rock. It is Tanóvu. In some way or other the ancient *Kalóu Vu* had come to be identified with the rock. In days of war he had often been propitiated in his rock-form by plentiful feasts and offerings. Beneath, in the water of the ocean, lie submerged two other rocks. They are the wives of the male god. Legend asserts that, between him and them, shall grow no tree so high as to intercept Tanóvu's watchful, stony gaze. But his time has gone by. Also the power he once wielded over his wives is waning; and the proof is that some trees are at last beginning to grow up between him and them.

The influence of Tanóvu has been very great. First he appeared as clan-hero, and gradually, as the original clan broke up into others, its clan-god evolved into a tribal god honoured by most of the people in

<sup>1</sup> This tree is named "*Ndánindáni*" in the Mbáuan dialect. There are several kinds.

Ono. The stories concerning him gradually increased in number and incredibility. The deeds of an ordinary man were magnified again and again by his ardent followers. Nothing was denied him. Peculiarities of the fauna and flora, and of geology, even to the formation of the islands themselves, were readily believed to have been caused by him.<sup>1</sup> The fogs of the ages made him loom in fantastic greatness; and so the belief grew that "there were giants in those days."

<sup>1</sup> Qat of Banks' Islands is another hero who has the same powers in Melanesian mythology. He, however, is more like a sprite than a giant such as Tanóvu. Maui and his brothers of New Zealand folk-lore are Maori culture heroes, who are responsible for curious geological formation. *Vid.* Sir George Grey, "Polynesian Mythology," p. 11 ff.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE *KALÓU VU*—*continued*

WE have seen that spirit-worship and general ancestor-worship differ in that the former was less orderly than the latter, and yet, in Fiji, neither was looked upon as official. But the reverence and service paid to the *Kalóu Vu* (which is a special form of ancestor-worship) were official, as will be readily perceived from the following considerations :—

(1) A priest was appointed as soon as the cult of the clan was established, and his business was to see that the tribal devotions and offerings were carried out properly.

(2) The gradual development of a priestly family in the clan shows that the official character of the cult had a tendency to become firm. In some cases, the hereditary nature of the priestly office was so strong that even a woman might succeed to it.

(3) Land disputes are occasionally settled at the present time and boundaries adjusted by appeal to the residence of the *Kalóu Vu* ; this is not only a proof of the official nature of the cult, but also of the fact that the *Vu* was the first to claim ownership of land.



(4) Tribes and clans far distant from each other often claim relationship, upon the ground that they are "*Kalóu Vu Váta*," that is, recognising the same *Kalóu Vu*.

(5) The claim which the descendants of the *Kalóu Vu* had upon each other clearly confirms the view we are now taking. If a stranger had the same *Vu* as the residents of a particular town, he had the privilege, when passing through, of taking anything of which he had need. The understanding was, in most cases, that his friends might return the compliment at some future time.

In illustration of the above custom, there is an account given in the Government Report<sup>1</sup> of the meeting of chiefs at Mbau, of a difficulty created by the practice referred to. Some people from Ngau, under cover of this custom, killed and ate a pig which they found at Mbatiki, with which place they were "*Kalóu vu váta*." In the discussion which followed on the case, Ratu Oséa, one of the chiefs, said that the custom was a right and good thing.

As examples of No. (4), we might put on record innumerable instances of common origin. The system has spread like a network all over Fiji, until scarcely a town is without its "common origin" relatives. The following instances will suffice :—

The residents of Nasávu (Vanúa Lévu) and of Óno (Lau) are "*Táuvu váta*." The same is true of Mbau, Namúka (Mádhua) and Navátu (Dhákaundróve) :—

<sup>1</sup> Official Report, 17th Dec., 1879.

Yanúdha (Dhákaundróve), Mbenáu (Táviúne), Dháu-tatá (Mbau), Levúka (Ngau), Sómosómo (Ngau), and Ngasáu (Kóro):—Sóso (Kandávu) and Múairá (Yasáwa):—Vutía (Réwa) and Tavúki (Kandávu):—Lásakáu (Clan Nambóu at Mbau) and Nawáisómo (Mbéngga):—Nawaisómo (clan Vatuvia) and Mokani (Mbau):—Malambi (Mbéngga) and Námbouálu (Óno):—Ndakúni (Mbéngga, clan Vangándra) and Lakémba:—Natáulóa (Nairai) and Sómosómo:—Nadhúla (Yasáwa) and Wailévu (Dhákaundróve):—Yánawái (Wailévu) and Vátuléle (Kóro):—Nódho and Nayáu (Lau):—Muánaidháke (Lau) and Ketéi:—Múndu (Kóro) and Ketéi (Totóya):—Vúniwáiwái (Dhólo), Nákumbúna (Ngau), Rávitáki (Kandávu), Nasóki (Moála) and Ndravúni (Kandávu)—The list of towns thus linked up might be lengthened interminably.

There are three convertible terms by which the “common origin” of the clan might be described, viz.:—*Táuvú vata* (same origin), *Véitáuvú* (mutual origin), and *Kalóu Vu vata* (same god-origin). The first two relate only to similar origin. The last indicates that the origin was looked upon as divine, or that the progenitor had been raised, by the course of circumstances, to the state of divinity. The case of the four towns, Navúniwáiwái, Rávitáki, Nákumbúna and Nasóki, which have the same *Kalóu Vu*, shows this very clearly. The *Kalóu Vu* in those towns is Ngáuniíka, and the god had a “*Yávu*” or sacred foundation in each of them. Hence, the four villages

are connected by a divine pedigree, and the god himself is honoured by religious worship.<sup>1</sup>

The story in connection with the relationship between the districts of Nódho and Nayáu (Lau) is one which includes both the human and the divine elements. It runs as follows:—The fishermen of Nódho went to Násilái (Réwa) to fish, and discovered

<sup>1</sup> On the whole subject of *Kalóu Vu vâta*, Mr. A. M. Hocart has a most informative article in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain*, 1913, p. 102. He points out that he has found no instance where the *Kalóu Vu* is identical in clans which are *Kalóu Vu vâta*. With rare insight, he suggests that *Kalóu Vu vâta* refers to the *Kalóu Vu* of various tribes being associated together by marriage, at the same time keeping their individual identity. In the face of the evidence he adduces, we are compelled to widen at least the accepted meaning of the phrase. That we need not give up entirely the old translation is supported by the example I give above of Navúniwáiwái, Rávitáki, Nákumbúna, and Nasóki, all of which were *Kalóu Vu vâta*, and the *Kalóu Vu* through whom they were connected was Ngáuniika. Further, this god had a *yávu* or sacred foundation in each town. All the clans paid him religious worship.

In such cases where the *Kalóu Vu* are not identical, there is a subtle meaning of the word *vâta* which should not be overlooked, that is, the reference to an equality of status. The word excludes superiority in the one or the other, and also the possibility of serfdom in either clan. "*Tauvú* may not meet in battle: so at least in Namúka, Vanúa Lévu." (A. M. Hocart, *Man*, p. 6, note.)

When two clans are united by the marriage tie, it may be said further, though the *Kalóu Vu* may be associated only, and not identical, it will follow of course that the associated *Kalóu Vu* will be held in mutual respect. The fact that the clan-members have "common ghosts" (as Mr. Hocart calls them), amongst their forefathers would be a religious tie of first-rate importance, and the outstanding feature of this kind of clan-connection. Mr. Hocart says in another article that the tie between *tauví* and *tauví* is religious. (*Man*, 1914, p. 193.)

*Kalóu Vu vâta* may have a further meaning. The clans concerned may retain their own individual *Kalóu Vu*, and, at the same time, come by marriage to give to a third origin ghost a respect and reverence which raise it to the position of a real *Kalóu Vu*.

there a shark stranded on the beach. When they opened the fish they found a girl still alive. Full of astonishment, they asked the maiden whence she came. To which she answered, "from Nayáu," but the whereabouts of the town she did not know. The chief herald of Nódho claimed her as his wife and subsequently she bore him a son whose name was Vúvu. This son became the *Kalóu Vu* of Nódho. From the foregoing circumstances Nódho and Nayáu have become related.<sup>1</sup>

It is remarkable that the majority of these clan-relationships are based on marriages. Either a woman flies to another town and is married there, or she has been stolen, or has been wrecked at the place, and subsequently has become the mother of a chiefly race. The fact is important when we consider carefully the case of No. (4) mentioned above. The relationship of clan with clan is nothing more than a development of the *Vásu* right.<sup>2</sup> And, although the connection usually takes place far back in the history of the people, the clan considers itself, like the *Vásu*-child, to be at liberty to commandeer property belonging to the related clans. As stated by Governor Thurston in Commodore Goodenough's report,<sup>3</sup> "*Véitauvú* are descended from the same

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Basil Thomson records independently this story.

<sup>2</sup> It was a source of gratification to me after having made these observations to find that Mr. A. M. Hocart had taken the same aspect of the *táuvú* relationship on which to build his theory that *táuvú* originated in exogamy. *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, 1913, p. 104. The whole tendency of the inquiry is to support his theory.

<sup>3</sup> July, 1874.

communal family ; they have the same fathers, or in other words, the same gods ; they may take each other's property," etc.<sup>1</sup> In confirmation of the close likeness between the individual *Vásu* and the clan which is *táuvú vata* with another clan, it is definitely asserted that *Vúvu*, the *Kalóu Vu* of *Nódho*, was *Vásu* to *Nayáu*, and his mother (the girl who came from the shark) was *Vásu* to *Vanúa Lévu* because her mother had gone from the latter place in former times to *Nayáu*, and had married there. Thus, there were amongst the *Kalóu Vu* individuals who were *Vásu*, just as, at the present time, we find them amongst the ordinary people. It is more than likely, however, that the *Vásu* right, as found amongst the *Kalós*, is really a modern development of their mythical history.

Passing from the subject of *Véitauvú*, the question now arises, was there ever an Olympus in Fiji ? The answer may be given very simply—There were tribal gods because there were tribes ; but there were no national gods because there was no nation. The Rev. J. Waterhouse's division of " gods most widely known " means just what it says and no more. A " god most widely known " was not necessarily a god higher in the scale of divinity. There was no hierarchy of gods or spirits in Fiji.

The truth is that the Fijian never got beyond the tribal god. *Ndengéi* is said to be the chief god of Fiji, but the Rev. Thos. Williams admits that only a

<sup>1</sup> *Dhákaundróve* must first present a whale's tooth before taking goods from *Namúka* or *Moála*. A. M. Hocart, *Man*, (1914), p. 194.

very small number paid any worship or reverence to him. His priests have no power whatever over priests of other gods. The inhabitants of the Group (other than those living around *Kauvándra*, *Víti Lévu*) made no offerings to him, and his power is nothing to them as compared with their own *Kalóu Vu* or their parochial spirits

How then does *Ndengéi* come to be classed as the chief god of Fiji? Simply and only because he was first in time amongst *Kalóu Vu*, and because he was nearest to the root of the dominant race in Fiji. As the various new tribes were formed, they slowly broke away from their interest in the parent tribe, and made new interests often antagonistic to it; and so *Ndengéi* correspondingly lost his power over them.

*Ndengéi* might have been the Zeus of a Fijian Olympiad if further integration had taken place under some Fijian Napoleon. No such personality had arisen up to the time of the introduction of Christianity. *Dhákombáu* was the nearest approach to such a conqueror, and even he exercised a merely nominal authority over those tribes that were immediately near him.

In some respects, *Ndengéi* was like Zeus, for he was the god of thunder and earthquake; also he was embodied in a snake like the Greek divinity. He had, however, none of the strong activity or force of Zeus. If he had been the chief god in a hierarchy, his character would, doubtless, have become more virile.

## CHAPTER VII

### SACRED STONES AND IMAGES

By sacred stones, I mean those which have been regarded by the natives, at some time or other, as gods. There are no true idols in Fiji.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the Fijian attempt to carve his god to any form. It was sufficient for him if something mysterious were to happen in connection with a rock or tree in order to constitute it as divine.

Of such sacred stones there are not a few in the various islands of the Group.<sup>2</sup> At Mbau, for instance, there is lying near the Mission House a rounded stone which was once a fish-god. I have already mentioned a rock of the kind in the story of Tanóvu, p. 55. The prominent rock on the brow of a hill in Ono overlooking the broad Pacific is supposed to be intimately connected with that august deity. Though he himself was easily thought of as dwelling in other places, he was regarded as being particularly present in the stone referred to. We easily recognise here the incipient idea of omnipresence.

<sup>1</sup> Erskine, "Western Pacific Islands," p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. A. J. Webb mentions water-worn stones as being gods in the hill-country. They were called *Nakalouwátu*. *Aust. Assoc. for Adv. of Sci.* (1890), p. 622.

There is a remarkable stone in Sóso, Kandávu, which is very ancient, and still commands the fearful awe of the people in the village. It is called the "*Vátu Vúka*" (flying stone), and is probably meteoric in its origin. It is closely related to the *Kalóu Vu* of the place, in so much as they say that it is the god himself, and that it flew from the Yasáwa Islands to Sóso.

In former times nothing of importance would have been undertaken by the tribe without consulting this oracle, and the people were in the habit of bringing large feasts to it.

At present the stone lies half-buried at the rear of a disused house-foundation belonging to the old line of chiefs. Christianity has shorn off much of its ancient power. But the residue of its potency is by no means despicable. The spirits of the ancient line of chiefly personages are still supposed to be its faithful guardians, and to be engaged on its behalf.

Hoping to acquire it, I asked that I might take it away. One would think that a mere stone, disused at that, would be given at once. But, though it lay neglected and overgrown with grass, I suddenly found myself resisted. "Not so," said the head man of the town, "I cannot give it. Some time ago I gave away a club belonging to our chiefly ancestors, and I was subsequently brought to the edge of the grave, where I lay for the space of three months. I know that I should die if I were to give you the stone. Take it away yourself, sir." But I knew enough of native character to refuse such an offer. For, assuredly, if



any evil or affliction were to follow my appropriation of the stone, I would be directly blamed for it.

The following extract from Mrs. Smythe's book is interesting, referring as it does to the Réwa god, Wairúa :—

“ In the afternoon we left Namúsi, and ascended the secluded and lovely valley in which it lies. On reaching the sacred place whence the Réwa god, Wairúa, was said to have drifted, we stopped to examine it more carefully, and asked the guides to point out the exact spot. They indicated a hole in a small tree by the side of the stream, a few yards from the path. Manóah put his hand into the hole and brought out an oval stone of very regular form, about the size of a swan's egg. The guide said that was the god. Manóah again put in his hand and brought out some small stones of a similar shape, which they said were the god's children. We then began to question them about the god, on which they looked very grave, and pressed us to move on. Manóah wanted to throw the stones away, but as the act would only have irritated the natives, without doing any good, we desired him to restore them as he had found them.”<sup>1</sup>

In the town of Nakórosúle in Dhólo, Víti Lévu, lies another noteworthy stone-god, called Mbóseyawá. I was fortunate enough to see and photograph it. The rock stands in the thick bush near the town, half-buried in the earth. The story of the god is unique in every way. Fijian deities are almost invariably cruel

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Smythe, “ Ten Months in Fiji ” (1864), pp. 77, 78.

and fierce, and such gods are the embodiment of what might be termed the most characteristic feature of the Fijian race in ancient days. But the god of which I speak is an expression of another marked trait of the native mind, viz., that of delaying matters of business and policy as long as possible. There is with the Fijian, as all those who are acquainted with him know, a decided objection to haste, especially in decision. He was not accustomed to be guided so much by his judgment as by his feelings. Usually, judgment issues in a conclusion less quickly than feeling, and the Fijian mind was largely under the domination of his emotions. In any crises, his mental experience was like a racecourse where all the feelings inherited from the clan ran riot. Consequently, he himself felt implicitly the danger that threatened him of making hasty decisions. This was often his salvation. It was his custom to let the feelings and impressions of his mind come to the bursting point before he could be persuaded to action, and to postpone definite decision as long as he could.

Now the name of the god at Nakórosúle is Mbóseyawá which in the local dialect means "to delay final decisions." The people of the town think very highly of him still for this trait, and also for his potency during former times in bringing peace between opposing clans. Since they learned the tenets of Christianity they have endeavoured to find some parallel between Christian love and the peace-promoting nature and efforts of their ancient god.

The chief man of the village told me of various ways in which the god's influence tended to peace and goodwill. If the clansmen were discussing in council how they should slay a certain man, it was the special prerogative of Mbóseyawá to prevent the execution, by moving their minds for a postponement, with a view to promoting mercy. Or, should the enemy be meditating mischief, or conspiring for war against them, anyone might take a bowl of *yanggóna* to Mbóseyawá, and ask his aid. That good divinity would immediately confound the evil counsels of the adversaries by unconsciously influencing them towards delay. When the Rev. Fred. Langham first took the Gospel to this town, the chief, whose name was Rótavisóro, was living up on the hill-fort. Mr. Langham sent a message to him, therefore, requesting that he should come down and hear the story of Christianity. The chief answered, "*Malúa*," or "Wait, I will come down in the morning." This answer was attributed by the people to the wise influence of the god Mbóseyawá.

Sometimes the work of the village proceeded very slowly, and it was customary for the natives to use the proverbial saying, "Mbóseyawá has entered into the work."

At the present time, no worship is tendered to the rock, and, unlike the god at Sóso, he exerts no malign or fearsome power over his quondam worshippers.

We noticed at the beginning of this chapter that the Fijians, though ingenious in many ways, did not employ their skill in the making of images. Hence we

have no worship of idols, as such. I happened to discover, however, one very curious exception to the rule. There are, at the present time, in the keeping of the Wáimaróu tribe in Dhólo, Víti Lévu, two ivory images, male and female. They are about nine inches in height, and are made of carved whale's teeth, no fewer than six teeth being used in the construction of each. It is doubtful whether the Fijians made them. They were probably executed by sailors from the whalers which used to ply in these waters, for the pieces of ivory are held together by pins of lead very carefully inserted. The figures are exquisitely polished, and, though grotesque, are wonderfully well carved. The expression on the woman's face is almost tragic.

These figures are not so much in the category of the idol as in that of the mascot. For they are believed at the present time to hold in themselves the welfare of the clan, and especially of the high-born line.

Visitors are not welcomed who wish to see the curious little ivory chief and chieftainess of the Wáimaróu tribe, as the couple are ostentatiously called. Whether this reticence on the part of the owners is due to the fear that the presence of strangers detracts from the virtue of the mascot, or whether it arises from an inordinate desire to extort money from the inquisitive, I cannot say. Probably, both these reasons are in the native mind. At any rate, ordinary folk are not allowed to view the ivory pair unless some gift is made to the chiefs.

A friend and I were fortunate in being allowed

to see, and actually photograph, the female. We entered the house where it was kept, and the doors were carefully closed behind us. The chief then went to a hiding-place near the mat-bed, and, after a little rummaging, he drew the image forth. But, before he showed it to us, he anointed it gently and tenderly with the oil of the cocoa-nut tree, as if it were alive, and decorously bound a silk handkerchief about its loins. Then we were allowed to examine it at our leisure.

The chief told us that it had been brought from Réwa to Sóloirá, and thence to the chiefs of Wáimaróu, who had retained it ever since. The custom subsequently grew up of eating some chiefly food before viewing it. He also informed us (and the man evinced every sign of credence in his statement) that, if a stranger touches the image, he will have no more children, and, if a boy as much as looks upon it, he forfeits his power to propagate offspring.

The *Andi ni Wáimaróu* (Chieftainess of Wáimaróu), as the image is called, is still preserved as a sacred thing. A gift of twenty pounds was offered some time ago for it, but the chief would not hear of selling his treasure. The figure appeared to be a godlet, fetish, and symbol combined. (See photo.)

## CHAPTER VIII

### SYMBOLISM

THE people of the Fiji Islands, though they have no system of idol-worship, have a large number of symbols. The Fijians are a most ceremonious race, and no important function takes place without its corresponding sign. Nothing informal seems to have any weight with them.

If one tribe were conquered by another, the vanquished usually brought to the victors a basketful of earth, with the addition perhaps of a bunch of coconuts. The meaning of this symbol was, that the land in which they dwelt and the produce of the land were surrendered to the victorious tribe. When Mba was worsted in battle by Mbau on one occasion, the inhabitants of the former district brought to the latter a basket of earth stuck with reeds.

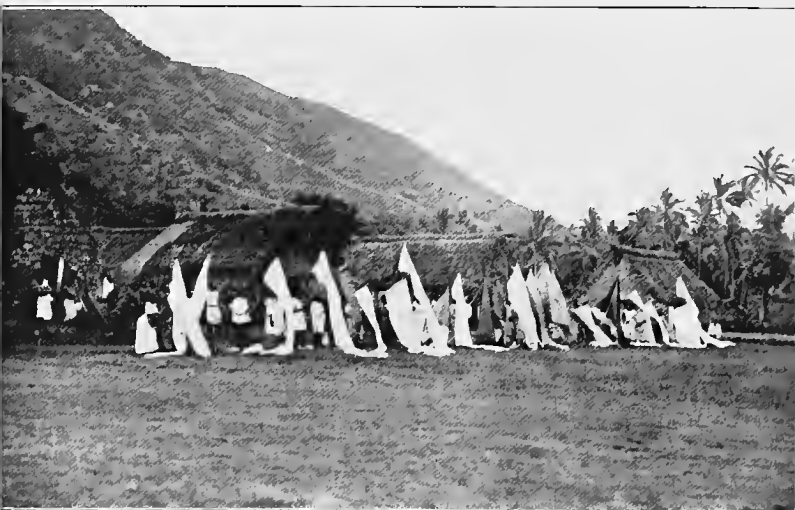
Native cloth, or "*Mási*," to give the native name, was also a regular symbol. Three different uses may be mentioned :—

(a) When a young man assumed the full status of a clansman he was dressed in *mási*. It was a sign, to him and to others, that he had attained his majority,





A VILLAGE SCENE.



DRYING MÁSI



and it corresponds almost exactly to the *toga virilis* of the Romans.

(b) The material was used as a turban, and so became the symbol of chieftainship. No ordinary man dare wear a *mási*-turban in the presence of a chief. The chiefs themselves wore it with studious dignity ; they never, for instance, doffed it to anyone except to the representative of the British Crown.

Róko Túi Mba, in the meeting of chiefs, at Lau<sup>1</sup> said, " When the Governor comes to open a meeting, it would be much more respectful and becoming of us chiefs if everyone present had turbans on, and as soon as the *yanggóna* is ready, then for every chief to uncover, as a mark of the very highest respect that can be possibly paid to the Queen and her representative."

(c) *Mási* was employed by some tribes in a very important way during the investiture of chiefs. When a head chief died, the virtue of his chieftainship was supposed to remain some time in his body. The "*Máta ni vanúa*" (face of the land), the clan-herald, an official whose duty it was, took a long piece of *mási*, and waved it in a ceremonious fashion over the corpse. After this, it was wound around a piece of wood and hung up in the house of the *máta ni vanúa*. On the day of installation, it was taken down, placed on the head of the succeeding chief, or around his waist, until the function was completed. Then it was thrown away as being of no further value. Thus the virtue of the chieftain's office was effectually transmitted.

<sup>1</sup> Government Blue Book, 20th Nov., 1880.

The foregoing custom was frequent more especially in Kandávu during earlier times.

Certain shells had recognised symbolic meaning and value in the Fijian marriage ceremony. The "*Sáuwánga*" (Javan *Murex*) is very much used for this purpose in Madhuata. The same shell was often given as a "*Korói*" or decoration to the brave in battle. Cowries, both large and small, were highly prized. Another shell, called the *Vúro* (*Conus marmoreus*), takes the place of the Victoria Cross in the estimation of the Fijian warrior.<sup>1</sup>

The *Vúro* is the shell which was much in demand for scraping away the bark of the paper-mulberry, in order to lay bare the fibrous substance used in making the chiefly *mási*. The mode of decoration of a valiant fighter was as follows : If a man had been conspicuously valorous in battle, and had slain ten men, the reward was one *Vúro*, which he wore upon his arm ; it was called his first "*Tóra*." If he slew twenty men he received two *tóra* ; if he accounted for thirty, he was decorated with a third *tóra*, and so on. A brave man indeed would that Fijian be who had slain his thirty foes in war. The standard of courage is thus very different in Fiji from what it is in European countries. The slaughter of men is not a necessary proof of the bravery of the man who wins, for instance, the Victoria Cross.

The "*Rói*" (mosquito-swisher) is considered a

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to contrast this symbolic use of shells with the very practical shell-money in New Britain. Danks, *Journ. Anth. Inst.* (1888), p. 305.

most aristocratic thing, and it is still a high honour to receive one of them as a gift from a chief. In early days no one but the chief was allowed to make use of the *rói* in public; and the gift of one implied the recognition of a noble rank in the person to whom it was presented. A peculiar custom is said to exist in Vanúa Lévu. If a man of high rank died in a certain portion of that district, a *rói* was sent to a clan in the west of the island, who took charge of it and sent it by courier to the island of Dhíkombía. The tribe living in Dhíkombía appropriated the swisher as their property. No one seems to know the meaning of the usage.

Clubs enclosed in various ways were ominous symbols. The symbolic virtue of clubs varied according to their age and history. Some of these heavy wooden weapons have been quite celebrated; many of them are notched, the signification being that a man of high rank had been slain by the club in previous times. It was also thought that a certain amount of the chiefly virtue of the dead man entered the club. Most of these clubs received names, and were almost personified. It is easy to see, therefore, how one such weapon of war might thus become a very powerful symbol of challenge, or of request for help, in times of difficulty or tribal conflict. Other weapons, as spears, for instance, may be used in like manner, though on account of their length they are not so convenient.

Another well-known honoured symbol was, and still is, the *Káva* root (*Macropiper methysticum*), from which the drink known as *Káva* or *Yanggóna* is prepared.

The root takes rank with the sacred *Soma* of India, and the *Haoma* of Persia. In ceremonies and feasts, the plant is placed on top of a heap of food about to be presented ; and the man who officiates, taking hold of it, pushes it a little towards the recipient, at the same time uttering some accepted formula. All the food goes with the *Káva* root. In passing, one might add that the liquid made from the *Káva* plant is sometimes devoted to the gods as a libation,<sup>1</sup> and it is also used as a lustration<sup>2</sup> when a youth is initiated into the clan called Wainimála.

In times of extremity, ashes often had great significance. They betokened that the person who offered them was reduced to despair.

The "*Dhíva*" is perhaps more of a charm than a symbol. It is composed of the pearl-oyster shell with the rough back thereof cleaned away so as to reveal the mother of pearl. Around this are affixed carved pieces of ivory, the whole being of a circular shape about six or eight inches in diameter. The *Dhíva* is not unfrequently seen hanging on the breasts of male dancers in Fijian "*Mékè*" (dance) entertainments. In former days, the *Dhíva* was highly valued by warriors, who declared that the ornament made its wearer invulnerable.

But the symbol *par excellence* is the whale's tooth or "*Tambúa*," and all other Fijian symbols and signs will be thoroughly explained in it. The next chapter will deal with the *tambúa*.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. L. Fison, "The Nánga," p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

## CHAPTER IX

### SYMBOLISM—*continued*

#### THE *TAMBÚA* OR WHALE'S TOOTH

As to the origin of the name "*Tambúa*," the following will be interesting, since it is an extract from a paper written by an intelligent Fijian named Píta E. Tatawángga, and read before the Fijian Society in Súva :—

"Our people, who lived right away up in the middle of the land (the hill country) such as at Navósa, and the tribes near to them used to cut down a certain tree to be their precious property : the name of that tree was the '*Mbúa*' (prob. *Fagraea berteriana*) ;<sup>1</sup> they pared it down well so as to be narrow-pointed at both ends, and curved somewhat like a banana branch (or leaf stalk) ; after that, it was thoroughly rubbed till the surface was well polished, and then it was anointed with candle-nuts to become reddish coloured, and then they attached a string to it, as is done to whale's teeth, and it was then taken care of as their valuable property. It is very truly this, the name of which was the '*Mbúa-ta*' (cut *Mbúa*) or '*Ta-mbúa*,' from which originated that

<sup>1</sup> Dr. B. Seemann, "Viti" (1862), p. 439.

name '*Tambúa*.' The '*Mbúa-ta*' or '*Ta-mbúa*' was used by those living in the hill country for everything for which the '*Tambúa*' (whale's tooth) is used; as, the '*Tambúa*' of war, the '*Tambúa*' of feasts, or the '*Tambúa*' for obtaining a girl in marriage, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The *tambúa* is essentially a Fijian symbol. The Tongans never used it except for the purpose of getting canoes, or timber for canoes, from Fiji, and it was manifestly borrowed from the latter place. Nothing quite like it can be found in Melanesia. In the New Hebrides, sharks' teeth are used as money. The whale's tooth is much in demand as an ornament in Tahiti, Hawaii, and Tonga.<sup>2</sup> Sharks' teeth, again, are ornaments in the Marquesas Islands. In no case does either the shark's tooth or the whale's tooth approach the Fijian *tambúa* for power or meaning. It has reached the zenith of its potency in the Fiji Group.

There are symbols in other lands which embody some of its virtues, such as the Fiery Cross of Scotland, and the powerful talismanic ring of Persia.

But a *tambúa* includes the virtues of these and much more besides. Its value extends from the ordinary medium of exchange to the highest and most effective symbol of the fiercest feelings of the human race. The truth of the foregoing statement will be recognised after some of its uses are described. To that description we now proceed.

<sup>1</sup> Fijian Society Records, Aug. 11th, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Mariner's "Tonga Islands" (1827), vol. i, p. 250.

(1) It is effectual as the means of acquiring property, as, for instance, a pig. With a good *tambúa* it is quite easy to buy a monster porker from £5 up to £10 in value. The curious point about it is, that the very same whale's tooth may be purchased for 15s. or £1 in the stores, and then may be used in a ceremonious way to acquire an article or animal ten times its own price. Thus, we must infer that, while it is used as a means of barter or exchange, it is evidently something more. A few other instances will make this fact still more vivid. About five years ago 4,500 large yams were bought with the aid of only three whales' teeth valued at £1 apiece. A fine area of land was sold to white men about fifty years ago for a few teeth and the sum of £10. It is related that a chief in Mbéngga some few years since, not knowing the value of money, gave freely £300 when asked for it by a man who brought with him some *tambúas* to enforce his request.

There is no fixed value for the whale's tooth ; its purchasing power varies according to circumstances. It may be said that its worth depends in any given instance upon the tacit understanding that the privilege of making a request is thereby transferred to the recipient of it. The status of the individual presenting it also affects it considerably. Likewise, the importance of the *tambúa* is enhanced according to the chiefness of the ceremony of presentation. As a Fijian says, a *tambúa* is a "*Ka vákaturánga*" (a chiefly thing).

(2) To win the hand of a pretty bride of high birth, twenty or thirty of these pieces of ivory are deemed necessary. They are not looked upon as the price of the bride in the sense of a commercial consideration, yet such a number would generally soften the heart of the most obdurate parent. It would be certainly a most difficult thing for a Fijian father to withhold his daughter from a suitor who could display such a magnificent bride-price. A show of treasure so large would be sufficient in the old days to constitute an *élite* wedding. In the case where a young man could not find a respectable number of whales' teeth, he would beg from his relatives and fellow clansmen the required wealth, and the *tambúa* were usually forthcoming at once. On the day of the wedding the collection of *tambúa* is distributed amongst the friends of the bride, her father receiving the lion's share of the offering.

(3) At the birth of a child a similar present of a whale's tooth is made to the friends of the mother, and it is then called "*Ai rónggorónggo*," literally, "the taking in arms."

(4) Upon the death of a woman, the husband proffers a *tambúa* to the father-in-law. This *tambúa* bears the name of "*Ai rénguréngu*" (the kissing). When a high chief dies, large quantities of teeth are brought as a token of respect, and given to the bereaved relatives; in this custom the *tambúa* does duty for the wreath used at funerals in European countries. The reception of so fine a gift is not only a mark of respect,



but also tends by its value to moderate the grief of the mourners.

(5) If a clan build a house for a man, it is customary for him to offer as a sign of his gratitude a whale's tooth, which is presented with a particular ceremony to the chief or leader of the workmen. Róko Túi Mbúa is reported to have said in a council of chiefs <sup>1</sup> that the *tambúa* was the only property which exchanges hands in house-building.

(6) No diplomat ever goes to another person with any large request without a whale's tooth; and this was especially the case in time of war. No sooner were hostile proceedings likely to begin than messengers were sent with the symbol here and there to the various villages, as a means by which wavering peoples might be strengthened in their allegiance, and enemies conciliated.

(7) When a man is discovered in some crime or misdeed he will take a *tambúa* as an atoning symbol to his chief, and will make an earnest request that the crime shall be "covered." A significant case, and one well worthy to be remembered, is that of Navósa. About five years ago the people of that district brought and presented to the head of the Methodist Mission three teeth to cover the crime of their fathers, who had slain the Rev. Thos. Baker some decades previously.

The name of this particular *tambúa* is "*Ai mbúlu-mbúlu*" (the burial). The effort to obtain

<sup>1</sup> Government Blue Book, 1879.

forgiveness in the foregoing manner is often successful, to the detriment of ethical practice, and so of society.

(8) A higher honour could not be shown to a visiting official or notability than by presenting him with a number of *tambúa*. On such an occasion the address uttered in the ceremony is always studiously meek and self-humbling, is generally eulogistic of the visitor, and concludes, as a rule, with a petition for favours, or for mutual goodwill.

Under this head comes the ancient custom of the “*Nggálonggalóvi*.” Mr. H. Berkeley, who is recognised as an authority upon this point, wrote on one occasion to the *Fiji Times* giving the following description and explanation :—

“ The *Nggálonggalóvi* (literally ‘ the swimming across to the canoe ’) is one of the oldest ceremonies in Fiji, and was performed when the High Chief or his immediate representative visited one of his dependencies or provinces. It was performed by the *Máta ni vanúa* of the dependency or province visited, accompanied, by some of his followers, who presented to the chief a *tambúa* (in latter days, a whale’s tooth). He was then requested in most ceremonious terms to land. If the chief accepted the *tambúa*, all was well. The *tambúa* as a rule was accepted on board, but on other occasions the chief decided to accept it on shore. The *tambúa* might be refused when presented by a province or dependency for several reasons, *e.g.*, on account of disloyalty, in which event, as the chief was

generally accompanied by several hundreds of warriors, the effect was as a rule disastrous.

“ The primary idea of *Nggdlonggalóvi* is clear ; it was an act of propitiation made by the inhabitants of a State who owed suzerainty to their High Chief. . . . At the present moment the only persons entitled as of right to the *Nggdlonggalóvi* are (1) the Sovereign ; (2) the Admiral of the Fleet on duty in Fiji ; (3) possibly one delegated by the Governor or Admiral for the performance of special work.”

(9) The same sign is a most excellent gift to assuage the fiery temper of an irate Fijian chief. It is sometimes quite amusing to see how swiftly the fury of a man of rank dissolves before the magical action of the *tambúa*.

(10) The tooth was often sent on a mission of death. The Rev. Thos. Baker, mentioned above, lost his life through the fateful power of the whale's tooth. The Rev. Thos. Williams gives in his book on “ Fiji and the Fijians ” an account of the dispatching of a *tambúa* to purchase the death of a Fijian named Korói Tamána. The death-*tambúa* might be placed in a pudding or in a native basket, or in the mouth of a dead pig, in each of which cases the significance of the symbol becomes more ominous. No chief could touch it, so encased, without placing himself under a most solemn obligation to meet the wishes of the sender.

(11) Fortunately, the *tambúa* is not always used for purposes of evil. The authority referred to above vividly describes the classic case where the influence

of the whale's tooth saved the lives of several unfortunate women at Mbau. The incident was as follows : Two brave ladies, Mrs. Lyth and Mrs. Calvert, hearing that women were being strangled at Mbau, took each of them a *tambúa* decorated with ribbons, and entered boldly into the terrible chief Tanóa's presence, with the request that the fated ones might be saved. Their noble petition was granted.

(12) Sometimes, in the installation of chiefs, the symbols were decorated with streamers and used as a curious coronet. But this particular practice was a local one.

(13) A weird custom in vogue in former days was to place the ivory upon the breast of a dead man. His soul was supposed to take with it the spiritual part of the symbol, and, thus provided for, would travel to a tree "hard by Heaven's gate," into which tree he was to throw it as a passport on his journey to the happy land. The custom is similar to the penny laid in the hand of the corpse at an Irish wake, the obolus placed upon the mouth of a dead Greek, and many Egyptian symbols described by Dr. Budge. The tree (a *Tárawáu*) into which the Fijian dead are supposed to cast the *tambúa* is still to be seen on Vanúa Lévu, near Naidhómbodhómbó.<sup>1</sup>

(14) One more specific use of the *tambúa* should be mentioned in order that we may thoroughly under-

<sup>1</sup> Some say the tree is at Káuvándra in Viti Lévu as well, and that it is the "*Vándra*" or screwpine. Dr. Seemann refers to the *Tárawáu* at Naidhómbodhómbó; see "Viti," p. 322.

stand it. We have noticed that, if a person receives the whale's tooth, he is laid under a debt of gratitude or solemn obligation, which he is bound to discharge when called upon to do so. It may be that the recipient is for some reason unable to do this ; if that be the case only one way is open to him, viz., to send a larger *tambúa* in return, begging therewith to be relieved of his obligation. The practice of returning the whale's tooth is called "pressing down."<sup>1</sup> The Mission authorities make use of the custom of "pressing down" to neutralise any unreasonable request upon the part of the natives.

The uses of the *tambúa* enumerated above are not all that might be given. But sufficient has been said to show how important a factor symbolism has been in the history of the Fijian people. The fates of men, clans, and tribes have often depended upon the way in which the whale's tooth has been presented or received.

The tremendous power of the emblem which we are discussing is probably of quite modern growth ; but its varied application is a heritage of earlier years. When there were no teeth available, their place was taken by *mási*, mosquito swishers, clubs, shells, cocoanuts with sprays, baskets of earth, etc. But the sphere of each was much more limited than that of the *tambúa*. The club, for instance, would only be used naturally in war, while the basket of earth could scarcely be bartered for a pig. When the *tambúa* came, it gathered

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Thos. Williams, "Fiji and the Fijians," p. 35.

into itself all the earlier symbolic and emblematic conceptions of these rudimentary peoples.

How the first *tambúa* came to Fiji is a question difficult of solution. There is a legend of a whale which grounded in the Yasáwas earlier than the sixteenth century. The teeth were knocked out and worn as ornaments, or curiosities, and then were used in sacred ceremonies, becoming sacred themselves in their meaning and influence. It is certain, however, that early whalers discovered the value placed upon the teeth in Fiji. Ivory was found to command a better price in the South Seas than in London. Besides, it was a convenient method of bartering for supplies both of wood and food during the whaling season. It is probable that whalers deliberately exaggerated the magic qualities of the tooth, and so the covetousness of the Fijian was greatly increased. Ivory literally poured into the country, therefore, until whaling ceased in those waters.

The tooth gradually superseded certain chiefly symbols, as we have already seen. As time passed on, the inhabitants of the islands became more particular in their preference for some ivories. Big *tambúa* were considered better than small ones; dark-coloured ivories (made so by constant use and the application of turmeric powder) were preferred to those light-coloured;<sup>1</sup> old teeth were valued more than those newly acquired; and finally

<sup>1</sup> On this, see Capt. J. R. Erskine's "Western Pacific Islands" (1853), p. 439.

the teeth which had been used on important occasions gained a pre-eminence over those with a more humble history. The process of discrimination continued till some *tambúa* acquired a reputation like the old clubs mentioned in the last chapter. The sacrificial knife of an Aztec priest could not have been prized more highly. To those who knew the history of an individual *tambúa*, the spirits of the past seemed to hover around it. It is not wonderful, then, that some *tambúa* were never sold, but were handed on as heirlooms from generation to generation.

When a *tambúa* is being presented, or "led," as the Fijians say, it becomes the central feature of the ceremony. It is greeted with a curious cry of honour, and all eyes are intently fixed upon it. The task of "leading" a *tambúa* is allotted to a special officer. It would mar the function if another should interfere. The late Mr. D. Wilkinson told me that he had seen a man laden with whales' teeth staggering into the circle of spectators; and one who attempted to aid him was promptly knocked down, as if, like Uzziah, he had touched a sacred thing.

After the ceremony of presentation the supporters of the man leading the *tambúa* all cry out in unison, "*Mána*." This word is important, since it is a Melanesian term, and represents the inner principle of the religious beliefs amongst the people in the New Hebrides.<sup>1</sup> The Melanesian had no power apart from it, and the chiefs held their position by the power of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 52.

the *mána* which was thought to reside within them. As to the source of the power, the idea of the Melanesian was that it arose as a result of direct communication with ghosts (*Tindalo*); and the chiefs especially received from spirits the virtue whereby they were able to bring their evil influences to bear upon others. Dr. Codrington relates that Mairuru, chief of Walurigi, sent his son to be educated in a Christian school at Norfolk Island. "It was at once understood that a Christian education, which shut out belief in, and of, '*Mána*,' excluded him from succession as a chief."<sup>1</sup>

The word "*Mána*" appears in Hazlewood's dictionary as a term used in addressing a heathen deity; or it may be a sign, omen, wonder, and, by transmission of meaning, potent, effectual or efficient. Thus in Fiji the word may be applied to medicine (magical or otherwise) which is followed by good results. Missionaries have used the term in the compound word "*dhákadháka-mána*" (miracle), and it is also applied to the divine name of Jehovah. The meaning of the word may be so attenuated as to approach the sense of confirmation in the word "Amen" of our own form of prayer.

Considering that the word "*fetish*" originates from *facere* (Portuguese, *feitiço*) potent, and that "*fetish*" was applied to objects supposed to be permeated by a virtue not very different from "*mána*," it is reasonable to think that, in some of its uses at least, the *tambúa* comes very near to the fetish. At all events, Prof.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Codrington, "Melanesian Anth. and Folklore," p. 57.



Tylor mentions that a Fijian priest, preparing himself for spirit-possession, was accustomed to look steadily at a whale's tooth, amid dead silence.<sup>1</sup> And if it were not a fetish before such a ceremony, constant use in this way, by a priest, would certainly tend to impart to it magical efficacy.

<sup>1</sup> "Primitive Culture," vol. ii, p. 133.

## CHAPTER X

### SYMBOLISM AND CHIEFTAINSHIP

IN order to understand the nature of the *tambúa* and Fijian symbolism generally, we should not overlook an important factor in native life, to be seen in the power of chieftainship.

In Fiji the symbol, whatever it may be, reaches its highest importance when used by chiefs, or presented to chiefs, in the accepted way. The three conditions just mentioned are of the utmost significance to the native mind. Thus it may be inferred that symbolism will be effectual according to the amount of power or virtue popularly supposed to be invested in the chieftain caste.

Now it is to be recognised that, in common with the whole of Polynesia, the nobility in Fiji have a peculiarly high social status ; so high that it probably resulted from a semi-divine character bequeathed to them from ancient times.

Some light may be thrown upon this question by comparing the titles of men of rank in these islands with those in other countries. The coincidence is very striking.

Male titles of chiefs in Fiji are *Rátu*, *Ro* (in Vanúa Lévú), *Ra*, *Róko*, and *Ráturánga*.<sup>1</sup> Female titles are *Ranándi*, *Maráma*, and *Rámaráma*. All these titles have a constant syllable, namely, *Ra* or *Ro*. Although it is rather a far leap, let us now turn to West Africa. Dr. Nassau, in his book on "Fetishism," says that *Ra*, meaning lord or master, exists amongst the West African tribes. Kings, wizards, and gods had the titles prefixed to their names; for instance, *Ra Nyambe* is the divine name.<sup>2</sup>

Again, Dr. Nassau says it is the Egyptian word *Ra* which had filtered through into the Western languages; and we are thus led to look to the land of the Pyramids for further information. In J. E. Harrison's "Prolegomena to Greek Religion" we read that, "In so far as Osiris was a Sun-God, the well became a well of light in which the Sun-God *Ra* was wont to wash his face."<sup>3</sup> Isis controlled *Ra* by stealing his name.<sup>4</sup> and in the same book there is a hymn to Amen-*Ra* as follows: "He riseth on the horizon of the east, he is laid to rest on the west."<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that the *Ra* of West Africa is the same title as that given to the Sun-God of Egypt; and, moreover, the name is supposed to have magical

<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. M. Hocart argues that the word *turánga* when traced to its original meaning leads us to gerontocracy. *Man*, 1913, p. 143. But the facts given in this chapter, as viewed from the Polynesian standpoint, should have due weight.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. R. H. Nassau, "Fetishism" (1904), p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> J. E. Harrison, "Prolegomena to Greek Religion" (1908), p. 576.

<sup>4</sup> Hobhouse, "Morals in Evolution," 1906, vol. ii., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

quality. But this is not all. The ancient dynasty of Rameses means "born of the Sun." All this has a deep significance when we turn to the question of the Fijian chief, because it is generally understood that one branch of the Polynesian race came from the direction of Egypt, and perhaps settled in, or at any rate called at, India.

In the latter country, princes are called Rajahs ; and Raj means reign. Princesses received the title of Ranee ; and Rajan is king in Sanscrit. Rahu is the demon in the Hindu myth who has to do with the eclipse of the sun and moon.<sup>1</sup> The Indian word also for fire is "Rama." Rajah is the same word as the Latin Rex, and our Royal, Prerogative, and Regal are from the same root.

Coming nearer to Fiji, princes are called Rajah Rajah or simply Rajah in Sumatra ; and we are told that, when the Dyaks of Borneo kill an alligator, they call him grandfather and Rajah, which is the term they apply to their chiefs and elders.

In all the words given above, there is the common syllable Ra with its variations. These words are, without exception, applied to men of rank, or to gods (especially the Sun-God), or to fire, which is the glory of the sun. The coincidence in meaning and application with the Fijian titles is too striking to be ignored ; and the more so when we consider that the general name of the sun and of

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, " Primitive Culture," vol. I, p. 331.

the moon throughout Polynesia is *Ra* and *Maráma* respectively.<sup>1</sup>

The accumulative evidence seems to prove that the titles of the Fijian chiefs have had a wider and higher application in their root-connotation than at the present time, and that, in the narrowing down of meaning, the semi-divine flavour has clung to the titles and the chiefly office. Undoubtedly a relic of that early divine character is still left in the word *Róko*, which really has the significance of "divine person"; and *Róko* is the expression which the missionaries have taken up into the Bible to convey the idea of "hallowed" in the Lord's Prayer.

We know, too, that the chiefs of Fiji expected to become divine when they arrived in the unseen world, and some, like the Dhákaundróve men of rank, received their apotheosis before they died.<sup>2</sup>

There is good evidence that the position of chiefs in this Group has become what it is through Polynesian influence. In New Britain, the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides and other Melanesian groups, hereditary rank is at a very low premium. But, in the islands to the east of Fiji, it is vastly different. In Tonga, for instance, the chiefs alone were believed to enter Heaven. The commoners died, body and soul. Further east in Tahiti, if the chief's foot touched the

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Brown, "Maori and Polynesian," pp. 127, 130. William Ellis, "Polynesian Researches" (1853), vol. iii, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* in corroboration, A. M. Hocart in *American Anthropologist*, 1915, p. 638.

ground, or if he entered the house, the place became taboo. Accordingly, he must needs be carried wherever he goes.<sup>1</sup> It was fatal in New Zealand to touch any article which the noble had used. If a drop of his blood happened to fall on anything, it would become his property.<sup>2</sup> The glance of a Tongan chief would make an upper garment useless, so that it became the custom to remove it in his presence.<sup>3</sup> The names of chiefs throughout Polynesia were taboo.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in olden days, if a Fijian aristocrat touched food, it became too sacred to be taken as sustenance by the commoners.<sup>5</sup> There is a peculiar belief in Fiji which was related to me by an old native, and is similar to the ideas revealed in the above practices, that, if an underling happened to eat food which had been left from the chieftain's meal, he would become "*Mbukéte vátu*" or "pregnant with stone."

As still further evidence of the close relationship existing between the high rank of the Polynesian and Fijian chiefs, it will perhaps be interesting to give a list of special words applied to the latter by their subordinates in the Lau Group, and on no occasion addressed to others. The Lau Group is nearest to Tonga of all the Fijian Islands, and the people there have a close kinship with the Tongan nation. The following is the list of words :—

<sup>1</sup> Jevons, "Introduction to Religion" (1904), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

### *Chiefly Words of the Lau Group.<sup>1</sup>*

<i>English</i>	<i>Fijian.</i>	<i>Chiefly Fijian.</i>	<i>Approximate meaning.</i>
head	úlu	vanúa i dhake	upper part.
face	máta	ai seráu	the glory.
nose	údhu	ai réngu	the kisser.
ear	ndalínga	támba ni mánumánu	wing.
mouth	ngúsu	ndráka ni kúla	parrot's mouth.
tooth	mbáti	ai káta	the biter.
throat	ndómo	ndómo ni vónu.	turtle throat.
hand	línga	ai dháka	that which accomplishes.
belly	kéte	wávè	?
back	ndáku	ndáku ni vési	back of vési (green-heart tree).
foot	yáva	ai túratúra.	that with which he stands.
skin	kúli	kúli tambúa	ivory skin.
voice } word }	vósa	vákataatámbu	{ that which makes taboo.
laugh	ndréndre	vákasembúa	as the flower of the mbua.
decree	lewá	sau	the decree that comes to pass.
anger	dhúndru	tóka wálè	by himself, no one to go near
sick	táuvimáte	mílamíla	itchy.
dead	mátè	mbálè	falls.
house of chief	válè	lóma ni kóro	centre of the village.
bed	aimódhemódhe	ai tatávo	?
sleep	módhe	távo	?
pillow	káli	ai mbaléta	that which he falls against.
eat	kána	táura	?
to be	tíko	wiri	?

<sup>1</sup> For comparative usages in the Eastern Polynesian Islands, see Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 380 ff. (Samoa). W. Mariner, "Tonga Islands," vol. ii, p. 86. W. Ellis, "Polynesian Researches," vol. iii, p. 113 (Tahiti). Erskine, "Western Pacific Islands," p. 243.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Fijian.</i>	<i>Chiefly Fijian.</i>	<i>Approximate meaning.</i>
garden	wérè	ndóko séru	garden made finely.
boat	wánnga	vátaváta	something high as a shelf.
go	láko	léa	?
bath	sisíli	túmbutúmbu	?

The explanation of the Lauan custom in so addressing these words to their chiefs seems to be, that it is a kind of euphemism, or flattery of the chief, calculated to win his favour. The words in the third column are never used with regard to the person or property of a common man. In Lau, there are also special words and phrases which are applied to the property of the ladies as well as to their consorts. Many of the above terms may be used to either chiefs or their wives.

The high honour thus paid to the chiefs by their obsequious followers has a direct bearing on symbolism. A symbol used in the conventional manner, and by a chief, would be much more important and efficient than if it were in the hands of a man of low caste.

Concerning the object of symbolism it may be said, that it is the struggle to make clearer certain sacred ideas of obligation, and certain revered principles, which were too inchoate or abstruse to be lucidly expressed in words by the primitive Fijian mind. Similarly, in other countries, an idol is the result of an effort of the human mind to make more explicit to itself its own vague conceptions of the deity.

So a *tambúa*, when presented, means more than a



medium of exchange, even in a purely commercial transaction ; and on some occasions its purport is, on the other extreme, to express the strongest passions and emotions of the Fijian nature. A Fijian who tried to explain the *rationale* of the symbol said it was a “ *Ka ndokái* ” (a thing honoured) when presented in ceremony. Whatever conception of honour a Fijian is capable of, it is closely connected with his symbolism. The best, as well as the worst, that is in the Fijian character, is sealed by the emblems and symbols which he uses. Contracts, bargains, promises, forgiveness, pleas, treaties, were all confirmed by symbols as honoured tokens ; and woe be to the man who continually disregarded the obligations thus laid upon him. His life would be a misery ; in fact, he could not live in a Fijian community.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CLAN *VERSUS* INDIVIDUALISM

So far we have examined the Fijian character as *expressed* in certain religious beliefs, social customs, and ceremonial symbols. We shall now study it more directly as the *outcome* of particular social institutions.

It will be recognised by all who know the Fijian that he is a remarkable witness to the power of environment. In this chapter we are to find out how the growth, or otherwise, of individuality in the native is a direct consequence of the society in which he dwells.

There is no nation in the world whose units have not a certain degree of individuality. The everyday life of even a barbarous village never ceases to demand of the lowest members of it those actions which, accompanied by pain or pleasure, developed the personal sense. Every sane man comes at last to be able to say "I," and to fill the word with some content. But everyone does not utter the pronoun with the same force or meaning. The clause "I am," for instance, implies something vastly different, when uttered by the Supreme Deity, from its denotation when used by even a really great man. For the

Former, the phrase indicates purpose, will, knowledge, and cause, in infinite plenitude within. Himself, and for Himself. No mere man, however cultured, could put the same intensity into the statement of personal existence.

And, similarly, the forces of individuality differ within the sphere of human experience. People at the bottom of the human ladder cannot be expected, except by some miracle, to have as much individuality as the more highly cultured members of the nation. The beliefs, states, and actions of men result from their social systems. This is true in our own advanced nation. Fortunately, our constitution is elective and free, and the ultra-conservatism of barbarous peoples is largely obviated. An Englishman is not only acted upon by his social environment, but he reacts upon it as a voter, and as being free to express publicly his views on any subject. He is, in short, able to separate himself in thought from surrounding influences, and from the standpoint of a spectator, may approve, criticise, and judge, to the best of his ability. But the like privilege is denied to peoples less advantageously situated, and the upshot is that their characters are made for them while they themselves do not consciously create the social life in which they are placed.

The Fijians are such a people. They do in no way take an individual or active part in the formation of their society or social institutions. Like all barbarous nations they are ardent conservatives. No barrister

ever looked so assiduously for precedents as does the Fijian ; and, when he finds them, he clings to them most tenaciously. Therefore, progress is slow and practically unconscious, as far as his social relationships are concerned. He is what his father was.

It has been noted before in this book that the native is born into a social system, the kernel of which is the "*Mátanggáli*" or clan. The Fijian clan is a kind of enlarged family, where all elders are fathers, and all juniors are children. Family relationships are not very clearly differentiated (so far as authority is concerned), from clan relationship. It is no uncommon occurrence for a distant aunt to beat her nephew ; so long as they are of the same *mátanggáli*, it is considered legitimate enough. Such a thing would not be tolerated in an English family. If one of the clan be ill, the members of the clan will travel twenty or thirty miles on foot to see him, though the sick man suffer merely from a mild attack of influenza ; so strong are the ties which bind the members together.

The chief bond of the clan is the memory and cult of the *Kalóu Vu*, together with such customs dedicated to, or originated by, him. As a rule, the members of a clan claim proudly a connection by blood with the *Kalóu Vu*. But there are exceptions which are becoming more numerous at the present time. Men may be adopted into the community from another tribe. If a man's life should, for any reason, become unpleasant in his own clan, he may flee to another, on the condition that he shall be naturalised ; that is, he shall accept

the customs, beliefs, and usages of the people with whom he takes refuge, and shall work and fight with them. Needless to say, the practice of desertion is not very common, because the clan-life is the Fijian's chief joy. The most difficult thing in the world for him is to separate himself from his own people, and live as an exile from them. A Fijian without a *mátanggáli* is a very rare specimen ; and, if such a man could be found, it is usually because all his relatives have passed away, and he has become the last of his tribe.

We now pass to the inner life of the *mátanggáli*. All larger works are carried out by clan-labour. There was no such thing in early days as an individual trade. Differentiation took place, indeed, to the extent that there were evolved both a fisherman-clan and a carpenter-clan. These two phratries had great prestige owing to the secret knowledge and skill which, as a body of men, they undoubtedly possessed. But a single carpenter living unto himself was a *rara avis*. The carpenter and fisher classes were guilds or corporate bodies, absolutely exclusive, having their own gods and religious usages. Their knowledge was a common possession amongst them, and it was taboo to reveal it to outsiders. Hence the statement remains good, even in respect of them, that all larger works are carried out by clan-labour.

Turning again to the general question, we find that, if a house had to be built, the clan did it ; if a large canal had to be made, the members of the *mátanggáli*,

or several *mátanggáli*, excavated it. And so with every other undertaking of importance.<sup>1</sup>

Certain consequences arose from the above-mentioned custom :

(1) The individual Fijian developed a predilection for working in numbers. If he is set to work by himself he quickly loses heart, and becomes lackadaisical and without interest in his task. But his manner becomes immediately enthusiastic and energetic if he be allowed to throw in his lot with his fellows. The Rev. T. Williams has described very accurately the building of a house, and the shouting and leaping, the bustle and chatter, which continue without a moment's interruption until the work is finished. When the house is completed, the builders usually sit down in a company and give vent to their feelings of joy and satisfaction in one of their native chants accompanied by much rhythmic clapping of hands.

(2) There is produced also in the Fijian character an interdependent spirit. Self-reliance is a very evanescent quality amongst the native clansmen. One may notice again and again how the individual will be influenced now this way, now that, according to the opinions he hears expressed by his companions. A suggestion made quite casually by one of their number will sway the attitude of the whole company, while another inadvertent proposition will turn them like sheep in the opposite direction.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout Melanesia the people accomplished their tasks together. Florence Coombe, "Islands of Enchantment," p. 7.

Interdependence is most clearly proven by the conduct of a Fijian in the face of ridicule or the condemnation of his fellows. Mr. J. Stewart (late Colonial Secretary of Fiji) gave an instance, in a lecture delivered by him in Glasgow, of a man in Viti Lévu who tried to follow English methods of trading and thrifty living. His *mátanggáli* turned upon him in the most merciless fashion. They boycotted him, and so pestered him, that he died from the intensity of his humiliation. Mr. Stewart also related, as an instance of the strong clan-feeling at the time, that a preacher stated on the following Sunday that the culprit was squirming in hell for his misdeeds.

The interdependence of the Fijian is often a source of danger in a crisis. For instance, if a sailing vessel were to get into difficulties during a gale, it is most uncertain what the crew would do unless a chief were present. In such a case, everyone speaks, and contrary orders are obeyed one by one, or perhaps together, until confusion reigns.

(3) Absolute dependence upon those above him in rank plays a large part in the formation of the native's character. The chiefs and elders are most powerful, and their command, in the early barbarous days, was strictly carried out. The Rev. T. Williams states that a Fijian is implicitly submissive to the will of his chief.<sup>1</sup> This submissiveness was not only bred by the constitution of the clan, but was enforced by the club.

<sup>1</sup> "Fiji and the Fijians," p. 23.

Of the chiefs, the highest only were exempt from the “*Vákaroróngo*” (submission). The minor ranks might be more correctly termed transmitters of authoritative commands than originators of them.

The high chiefs alone, therefore, had an adequate opportunity of developing personality or individuality. Everything of importance was remitted to them, as leaders of the *mátanggáli*, for appraisalment, judgment, or direction ; and the people respectfully accepted and approved the final decision. In a meeting of chiefs at Bau, Róko Túi Mbúa stated, “ Our people love and esteem a strong hand.”<sup>1</sup>

The power vested in the chiefs is apparent in the right of “*Lála*.” The land was divided amongst the clans or phratries, and it was administered within the clan according to the needs of the unit. Amongst the clansmen no one could therefore be designated “ Lackland.” No man could be called a “ Capitalist.”

But the chiefs had no land. King Dhákombáu is credited by Lord Stanmore with the following, “ The land and the people are one. We rule both—we own neither.” The chiefs, in return for services rendered in the leadership of the people, receive not land, but certain rights and privileges. Amongst these was the very ancient right of “*Lála*.” This custom is the privilege extended to the chief, by which he may call the clansmen together at a moment’s notice, for the purpose of carrying out any large undertaking. The

<sup>1</sup> Government Official Report, 26th Nov., 1880.



right is somewhat like the feudal claims of our own early kings and barons.

*Lála* is said to be subdivided into (a) clan *lála*; (b) personal *lála*. The former was exercised by the chief in his position as head of the tribe, generally after discussion with his executive. The latter mode of *lála* is a fungus growth of the legitimate clan-rights of the chief, and was enforced by club-law if disobeyed.

Personal *lála* has been the fruitful cause of great trouble amongst the people of these islands. The population are just beginning to distinguish more clearly works that are for the benefit of the community, such as roads, bridges, etc., from arbitrary service to the chief, and they are consequently claiming their rights from the British Government. It is no uncommon thing to hear in the district councils strong protests against the acquirement of wealth and manpower by unreasonable and oppressive demands on the part of the chiefs.

When Fiji was ceded to England several councils were held in the 'seventies and 'eighties, and the representatives of the British Government met the chiefs for the purpose of adjusting the relationship of the new colony to the Empire. The proceedings of these meetings have been printed in an official blue-book, and are therefore accurate. The following extracts are taken from these reports in order to throw some light on the true nature of *lála*. When the custom of *lála* came up for discussion, there was some disposition to abolish it. The proposal met with strong

opposition on the part of the chiefs. Róko Túi Mbúa said, "Individuality of house-building is a mistake altogether; no one can build his own house, and the responsibility of it is too much for him."<sup>1</sup> Such is the chief's idea of the capacity of his people. He goes on to say, "If a man has no more food than is sufficient for himself, it is impossible to provide food for those engaged to build the house."

Speaking in the council at Ndráimba, Túi Lakémba, a high notability, argued as follows, "Who of himself can build a good house? And who desires to see a town with nothing but small and bad houses in it? Whoever heard of a man who plants a garden by himself, and whose family always has plenty to eat? Do not we Fijians do things in companies? How could one man build his house, and plant his garden, and build his canoe, and sail it all alone?" Then followed the strong assertion, "To do this we must cease to be Fijians."<sup>2</sup> From his standpoint he was perfectly correct.

A hot discussion followed. Róko Túi Tailévu remarked, "Now, if British custom is to be substituted for a respectful obedience to chiefs, as we have heard it is done in some places, can a greater evil happen? Does good ever come of an impudent, disobedient child? It will be the same with the people of the land if disobedience and disrespect to chiefs be allowed." He went on to say, "Chiefs! There will

<sup>1</sup> Government Official Report, 23rd Dec., 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Government Official Report, Sept. 1875.

soon be none of them, and our people will soon be in the most deplorable and pitiable condition, as children without parents."

One more quotation may be given. Róko Túi Lau said, "But should it become law that all men are to be free to follow their own minds and pleasures, then chieftain's authority and position come to an end, and '*Váka-Piritania*' (British custom) commences."<sup>1</sup>

The preceding quotations give an insight into the actual relationship existing between chiefs and people. They also make very clear that the people were like "dumb, driven cattle." A remark of the Róko Túi Namósi is very apt in this connection, "Our people still wait for the chiefs' bidding in all that they do."

These discussions took place over forty years ago; and so strongly entrenched was the chiefly authority that the ancient power is still exercised. Under British rule there are signs, however, of the growth of individuality in the native character. As we have already noted, they are beginning to bring charges of injustice and oppression against their chiefs in the annual councils.

The old custom of *lála* is a sign of immaturity. Yet it brings with it certain advantages. It ensures celerity in the execution of any work that may be taken in hand. A private individual in Fiji would have to wait an indefinite time for the opportunity of engaging men. This would cause him very great inconvenience. Again, the swiftness of house-building

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

was undoubtedly a great benefit to ordinary native folk, especially in the rainy season, since a house could be erected by a clan in a few days. Also, in a land where lifting appliances were scarcely known, the old *régime* was perhaps the only effectual way in which lightness of labour could be achieved. Another advantage secured was that the best wisdom of the tribe was placed at the disposal of the humblest member of the community. Great cohesion also resulted, for the clan worked as a unit. The Fijian clan is, so to speak, a single cell.

## CHAPTER XII

### INDIVIDUALISM *VERSUS* THE CLAN

FROM the previous chapter it can be inferred that the clan tends to create a dull uniformity within itself. The sparkling vivacity of a more civilised community is markedly absent. Any attempt on the part of a single individual to be different from the other members of the tribe meets with universal disfavour. No man must be better housed than his fellows, except, of course, the chiefs, who usually have fairly well-built places of residence. It is just at this point where the fallacy of the chiefs' arguments in favour of the old order appears. Nothing is more certain than that, if greater freedom were allowed for individual initiative, there would be more rapid development in the mental calibre of the Fijian; and mental growth is a most important condition of social success.

Individualism has had to fight for its existence in Fiji, as, perhaps, in no other community. Under the ancient system of communism there was no room for personal initiative. Want of time was one main obstacle, and public opinion another. Were a man to begin a scheme on his own account, his services would soon be required elsewhere by the programme

of communal work. At the present time he is required by that programme (fixed now by the Government) to work upon all sorts of undertakings. The Fijian is a "Jack of all trades": specialists are a rarity.

The development of individual perseverance has a heavy embargo placed upon it, because there is no inducement or reward for industry in any one direction. That which the native acquires by toil or personal venture is liable at any moment to be taken from him by an unscrupulous chief or covetous relatives. At the present moment, the man who has been paid off after having finished some work will be given no rest (unless he resolutely hides his pay) until the money is expended. Money and the most movable goods are, to a certain extent, looked upon as common property. A pair of trousers, for instance, have been known to go the round of a village, until they were worn out.

Proceeding with the discussion, we discover not only the absence of inducement to individual enterprise in a Fijian community, but also that the Fijian has not yet risen to the point when he can realise the possibility of a noble personal idea to be approached by and through his own endeavour. A man who wishes to progress may forgo monetary consideration as a stimulus to perseverance, but he may not ignore the impetus to be gained by setting up the ideal of high character. For a Fijian to conceive such a goal of character, and to attempt to realise it in daily life, would be to bring him into such isolation that only the very few have been found to make it their aim.

The words of Mr. L. T. Hobhouse are remarkably applicable to the case of the Fijian. "Individual conduct is often determined by compulsion of law or custom, not conception of good."<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the South Sea Islander is barren of plans and schemes. On the other hand, it may be truly said that he is rather an adept in both. What is becoming more and more necessary to him, if he is to grow in individuality, perseverance and purpose, is an ideal of life which would act as a binding and governing principle, as well as an inspiration, in all his attempts to progress. Unfortunately, obedience, not purpose, seems to be the distinguishing trait of the Fijians' character.

In the case of the chieftains, who have had, as a rule, everything their own way, and who have been for so many centuries the brains of the clan, one would have expected of them something like individuality. And indeed, many of them have strong personalities ; but, on account of the fact that they found little opposition from their people, they have produced in their temperament much of arrogance, pride, and childish vanity.

Therefore, though a change from the communal system would apparently be a loss in authority to these island chiefs, they would have, in the introduction of a freer social organisation, a better opportunity for the development of both their own characters and the characters of the people who live under their rule.

<sup>1</sup> " *Morals in Evolution*," vol. i, p. 22.

As a matter of fact, a newer state is being quickly ushered in. In the march of events nothing will prevent this. If it were advisable to keep the native in his unsophisticated state, it would be impossible. He is even now in a state of transition, and, in many cases, is showing an adaptability altogether admirable. Native captains of cutters, Government officials, mission teachers, medical practitioners, and others travel over the Group to their various appointments, thus causing an interchange of thought and a breakdown of local and artificial barriers between towns and communities, to which experience they themselves were formerly strangers. Hitherto the people, like the Tongans, were intensely tribal, and intercourse between them was largely restricted by jealousy, mistrust, or lack of psychological affinity.

But now, men are sent away from their own tribe, away from the interdependent life of the phratry, and are so forced to act according to their personal knowledge and capacity. The result is that some very good types of manly character have been developed, and they are a proof that the Fijians would probably survive the dangers of a complete transition from their present social system to one more in keeping with a scientific conception of what is needed to produce a strong individuality.

Those chiefs who have come much in contact with white people have received with the evils of civilisation certain mental benefits. Dhákombáu was a powerful individual, capable and ready to execute both good and



bad deeds of the extreme order. His capacity for thought was exceptionally good, and he is credited with uttering some fine things which could not altogether be the product of a purely barbarous training. On one occasion he was discussing electricity. "Ah, yes," he said, "you white men are great in your discoveries. There is a screen between this world and the land of all knowledge, and you have scratched it so thin that you can almost see through. I should have thought you were immortal gods, but—you die."

Those chiefs, on the other hand, who have been led into the evils of our own civilisation without assimilating its great educational and social advantages, quickly become wrecks on the sands of time. And there are many pathetic instances where men, who might have been notable leaders of their people, have prostituted their opportunities by foolish and criminal self-indulgence. Freedom without self-control caused their utter ruin. Those, therefore, who seek the good of the people of the Fiji Islands, will not advocate sudden and drastic changes at the present time. In the solution of this problem, the more hurry, the less speed. On the other hand, it would be equally foolish to refuse to support any reform which had a reasonable ground of success.

The peculiar character resulting from his institutions is no more plainly seen than in the way the Fijian's conversion to Christianity took place. The writer has seen them converted by scores and hundreds. As they work in companies, so also they tend to keep

together in their religious life and custom. One feels, however, that intensity of purpose is in an inverse ratio to the numbers who accept the Gospel. Intensity of conviction will never increase until education and a change of social organisation bring about more independent belief and action. The *dénouement* will be far more satisfactory in that case, even though it should result in a decrease in the number of conversions. One specific good, however, results from mass-conversion; that is, the people become voluntary pupils in a religious school, where they gain teaching well-calculated to inspire in them an ideal of life worthy of the name. Hence it would appear that the sanest course of procedure for those whose business it is must lie in the direction of careful, painstaking tuition of the native mind.

The religious psychology of the Fijians after conversion to Christianity reveals the peculiar features to which we have so constantly referred. All have volubility in preaching. As all can join in the building of a house, so each seems to think that he is able to preach. It is doubtful whether one male Christian could be found who could not fill in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour with a sermonette. There are certain ideas which seem to have become the common property of the clan-mind on which he can always fall back with the certainty of getting an attentive hearing. In view of this, there is a remarkable sameness in the native preachers' public addresses.

Words and phrases fall into grooves, as is natural

where there is a paucity of ideas and a multitude of words. In the training of preachers, the greatest difficulty is found in bestirring them to think for themselves. By dint of perseverance and careful tuition, some impression is made, and there is every reason to believe that, in the future, volubility will decrease, and originality of thought and utterance will increase. Thus a superior type of oratory will gradually evolve, and a more effective class of public speaker will be differentiated from the inferior example which occupies the village churches at the present time.

As to style in public utterances, it may be said that the native is, almost without exception, an adept in drawing analogies and interpreting allegory. Philosophical thought, which presupposes differentiation in mental experience and activity, is absent.

— The conclusions we arrive at are that a communal system such as that which obtains in Fiji induces monotony in the subjects' life and character, and also in their mental and religious outlook, and that, so long as the constitution of society continues as it is, so long will the growth of individuality and personality be slow. The absence of conflict of any kind whatsoever is seriously detrimental to the best interests of the race. Finally, we infer that if a free social life could be gradually instituted, the dangers of incidental catastrophes resulting from transition would probably be outbalanced by the gain in depth of character and intensity of personality.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MORAL CHARACTER

AS SEEN IN THE “*KÉRÈKÉRÈ*” (FIJIAN BEGGING)

PURSUING the method used in the study of individuality in the islander, we shall examine the morality of the Fijian as a consequence of his environment. Many people are led by erroneous or narrow conceptions of social life in general to forget that the Fijian's past is crystallised in his present social surroundings, and they proceed forthwith to pronounce judgment upon him as if he had had the same history as a European. The diagnoses of such people are, therefore, often unjust, caustic, and unscientific. For they take single threads of his character, and judge therefrom the warp and woof and all. But mercy comes with knowledge, and knowledge results from scientific study of the race in question.

It is not proposed to seek Fijian ethics in his barbarous religion ; for his religious experiences were peculiarly unethical. In the after-life of the soul, he saw no irresistible law of retribution working out man's destiny. The nearest to such a law that he could realise was the unpardonable sin of being a bachelor.

A bachelor was slain at the river of death by Nángga-nángga. "This was the second death." From some tribes, as in Kandávu, there are hints of certain tests being applied to those suspected of meanness and lying. The soul of the dead man was supposed to pass at one place through two great rocks which ground closely one against the other. He who passed through scathless was thereby proven to be a brave man. At another place the soul was tossed by four people, from a sheet, high in the air. If he were not carried away by strong winds he would be accounted a truly generous man, and would be allowed to pass on his way.

Compensation certainly accrued to valour, but valour itself was interpreted in terms of cruelty. The better land was open to all who obeyed the customs of their people here on earth. In fact, the heavenly country was merely a kinematographic view of the social life surrounding the native while living, photographed on the mind by usage, and vivified by imagination and emotion. Indeed, a moral retribution theory which was to take effect in an after-life would have little influence upon these people, because events far in the future were misty and unreal to them. The heavenly country was not a fact far away, but a present existence. It was a continuation of the present, earthly life. Generally, social status remained the same in the here-after as now. It was not possible for a commoner to join the ranks of the aristocracy in that other land. A high chief had every prospect of a noble apotheosis, while a commoner had to put up with the best position

he could find. There is nothing ethical, therefore, in the relationship existing between the native and his gods.

The beginnings of morality may, however, be dimly traced by examining certain aspects of his social life, and by noting some definite results which are to be seen by the close observer.

One of these aspects is the system of "*Kérékéré*" (Fijian begging).

The clan is a commune in which real and personal property are clearly distinguished. Land, for instance, is, as in all countries, real estate, but is looked upon as fundamentally the property of the clan. Each man has his allotment and he is supposed to use it. If he neglects to do so, another individual, by the consent of the *mátanggáli*, puts it to some good purpose. No man is at liberty to alienate his portion. Should he die without issue, the land reverts to the clan to be again apportioned as they think best. Houses, likewise, cannot be sold, as the clan works in the construction of them. Some high chiefs claim that they have the right to sell land, but in some cases recently, when the chief has done so on his own authority, the people have taken the law into their own hands, and have caused a considerable amount of unrest.

Personal property is respected to a limited extent. By personal property is meant those goods which the member of a clan has made or produced in his spare time ; such goods include mats, pottery, nets, salt, and the like. These possessions may be alienated, and are

often bartered away at what is called the "*Solévu*." On such an occasion, one town will arrange with another for an exchange of goods. The people from one community will bring, for example, pigs or mats, which they will exchange for pottery or salt made by the inhabitants of the other town. At an appointed place, the exchange is made without hurry, with much preparatory ceremony, and amidst unlimited feasting, rejoicing, and hilarity.

Within the clan, personal property is not held by any individual in the same sense as we understand ownership. All the members of the clan have a certain lien upon the goods belonging to any one of their number. Clearly the Fijian has made but one step from absolute communism of goods.<sup>1</sup>

The chiefs, aided by their quasi-feudal powers, have a perfect right to confiscate a pig or a mat, if the transaction be ostensibly for the good of the tribe. The owner may show his disapproval by keeping silence, but he dare not refuse the chief if he would keep his good character of being a kindly-spirited and generous man. Such a demand on the part of the chief implies a certain compensatory privilege of the owner of the property to come to his superior at some later time with a petition for a return boon. Amongst the members of a tribe or clan a man may, if he should desire something belonging to another, lay a request

<sup>1</sup> In New Britain private property is much more clearly recognised. See a paper by Rev. B. Danks, *Aust. Assoc. for the Advancement of Science* (1910), p. 456.

for it ; and, just as in the instance above, the owner of the article is bound by the customs of his people to give it to the one who wants it. The custom is called "*Kérèkéré*." This system is the chief means of exchange within the tribe, and it is of such a nature that it has not reached the form of barter. "The *Kérèkéré*," says Mr. J. Stewart, "is like the borrowing of jewellery from the Egyptians when the Israelites were preparing to depart."<sup>1</sup> He adds, "It is the first stage of evolution in which the proprietary unit was the tribe." So then, when a Fijian says of an article, "It is mine," he has far less meaning in the phrase than we usually put into it. We understand by the first personal possessive pronoun that no man has legal right to appropriate, claim, or use our property without our consent. When a Fijian uses the phrase, he cannot mean by it any more than that an article is his until someone, whose influence he dares not disregard, begs it. This is far from being a distinction without a difference.

Mr. Stewart called the *Kérèkéré* "a terrible weapon in the hands of the idle or indolent." The latter class know that their fellows cannot very well refuse their petitions if they would maintain their good character. The same gentleman further says, "if he (the Fijian) does refuse, he becomes the victim of an organised boycott."

The truth of these words must be accentuated here. The whole tendency of *Kérèkéré* is to create an idle

<sup>1</sup> Glasgow Lecture, 1898.



class. And not only so, but the general temperamental attitude of the Fijian people is, that they lean too much to one another, and lose therein that peculiar uprightness belonging to a man who depends primarily on his own resources. A man in Fiji may be so negligent that his garden becomes overgrown; yet this need not trouble him very much, as he can always have recourse to the *Kérèkèrè*; that is, he can beg in the customary and approved manner. From the ease with which their exhausted stock is thus replenished, many men yield to the temptation to habitual idleness and improvidence.

Moreover, the system opens the door to all kinds of schemes for over-reaching one's neighbour.<sup>1</sup> Covetousness becomes a bugbear of native society. I asked a superior Fijian the following questions dealing with the matter. His answers were naïve enough to satisfy the most critical examiner.

“Do people, as a rule, beg large things?”

*Ans.*—“Such goods as cups, plates, tables, food, are convenient things to ask for.”

“If a man *kérèkèrè*s from you, do you make a point of remembering that he has done so?”

*Ans.*—“That I do. Just wait a little while, and I will go straight to that man who keeps asking things from me.”

“Do you ever forget?”

*Ans.*—“Never.”

<sup>1</sup> Sir Everard Im Thurn states that *Kérèkèrè* brings with it no shame to the Fijians. *Med. Journ. of Aust.*, Sept. 26th, 1914, p. 299.

“ Suppose you go to him and he refuses to give, what then ? ”

*Ans.*—“ The friendship is over.”

“ When you ask for an article do you know that it means you are placed under a debt to that man ? ”

*Ans.*—“ Yes.”

“ Do you try to get the better of the other man ? ”

*Ans.*—“ Yes, I always try to get the better of him.”

— We are prepared, by the answers given, to accept as true the following statement from Mr. Stewart's lecture : “ The wealth of the Fijian consists in the number of persons from whom he can beg.” It is also manifest that a rogue could very simply over-reach his more ingenuous fellow, because there is no accepted standard of valuation. The circumstances in which a man is placed determine very often the willingness with which he parts with an article. The absence of a recognised standard of values has an important bearing, therefore, on the moral character of the native. Just as it is difficult for him to value an article of commerce, so he is unfitted to appreciate accurately the difference between moral values.

While there are some men in Fiji who are really generous and will oftentimes seal friendship with gifts, many, on the other hand, make friendship a means by which they impose upon the more industrious.

Some amusing illustrations may be given of the *Kérékéré*. A man received a loin-cloth as a present from a European. Some little time had elapsed when he came back to the donor and asked for a second

cloth, giving as his reason that his relative had come and taken the first one. Naturally, the donor inquired why he had given it to his relative. "Oh," said he, "I had already got his coat."

A Fijian carpenter was working for me, and having finished his task, received the money and departed. A youth belonging to the same clan came to me a short time afterwards, and asked, "Has Rátu Tavúa gone?" I replied in the affirmative, and queried, "Do you want him?" "Indeed I do," answered he, "I want to get his money." The answer from his point of view had no humour in it, and was quite in harmony with the accepted system of *Kérékéré*.

The *Kérékéré* takes away the wholesome fear of debt, a fact which has a detrimental effect upon the native character. A Fijian will never exert himself to discharge obligations which are due to fellow-members of his clan.

It is not indeed surprising that the people cling to the custom. By its use they know that they can never become absolutely destitute, and are loth to give it up for another system which they cannot properly understand. They see in it, too, a safeguard against the rise of rich men, which, in the opinion of the native, is no small gain. A rich man is an irresistible challenge to their natural covetousness. The chiefs, when questioned about its abolition, said, "Why should one man be richer than another?" The suspicion arises immediately in our minds that the chiefs were not so altruistic as their words make them to appear.

Enough has been said to show that here is a key to the present moral character of the Fijian. It has been stated by some that the native is lax in his dealings. How could it be otherwise? Is he not the result of his past? It would be strange indeed if he did not tend to limpness in his principles, or if he were not easily led into deceit. The Fijian is kindly enough, affectionate also after his own manner. But one of the greatest difficulties which the missionary faces is the task of stiffening the natives' moral backbone, and inculcating the bracing principles of commercial uprightness which the best Europeans hold so dear.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MORAL CHARACTER—*continued*

#### TABOO, AND THE GROWTH OF CONSCIENCE

THE early custom of Taboo was exceptionally complete in Fiji. The multiplicity of its ramifications may be read at leisure in the Rev. Thos. Williams's book.<sup>1</sup>

There were two kinds of taboo, (*a*) things which were taboo in themselves and were always so ; (*b*) things which were made taboo by chiefs or owners of property.

In the taboo itself there is nothing ethical. A man desires to save his cocoa-nuts or yams for a special purpose, and fixes up a taboo-symbol, which is supposed to be endued with supernatural or magical power. Evidently no moral principle is embodied in it. The owner acts from a purely egoistic motive, and endeavours to attain his end by acting upon the superstitious and personal fears of his fellows.

But the taboo in its outward effects upon society becomes a splendid preparation for the building up of a good character in a later stage of development. F. B. Jevons states that the present-day moral senti-

<sup>1</sup> " Fiji and the Fijians," pp. 196-199.

ments get their strength from taboo.<sup>1</sup> The question therefore arises how taboo becomes, in the process of time, the basis of morality.

One of the necessary conditions of moral growth is that a society shall be formed with common interests. But this truth has another side to it, for common interests imply that the members of the society shall, to a certain extent, think of the interests of others. It is only thus that morality is revealed in its noblest beauty. Given a company of men who distinguish themselves as personalities from the society in which they dwell, and from the persons who go to compose that society, feelings of mutual obligation tend to arise as a natural means by which the existence of the social organisation is secured. The moral "ought" has no reference to one's private instincts or passions as the ultimate rule of conduct, but rather to a law which is observable only in a society of men who have learned to distinguish themselves from each other, and yet who feel that their own safety depends upon their interdependence within the society, and upon the way in which their common interests are established. In a word, the moral "ought" is practically born in society, and is a generalisation from primitive and unethical obligations which have been imposed upon the members of the clan in such a system as taboo.

In the custom of taboo there grows up irresistibly a general sense of obligation to others. If a man

<sup>1</sup> "Introduction to Hist. of Religion," p. 85.

should place a taboo on an article, he must feel a need of that article. His motive in trying to save it may be entirely selfish. But, without examining critically the quality of his motive, his fellows within the clan would tend to respect it, if it were for no other reason than that they themselves had needs, which they, in their turn, desired to be supplied. Consequently, a dim respect for the need of the person setting the taboo mingles in their minds with the more powerful fear of evil accruing to them if they were to break the magical sanction.

When such a taboo is placed on the fruits of a crop or upon the honest product of labour, it comes to be looked upon as reasonable. The producer grew the vegetables, therefore he has a greater right to them than to articles upon which he bestowed no time or labour. In this way a discussion occurs in the barbarian mind which begins to have a truly moral aspect.

Differentiation takes place in taboo. For instance, the sense of obligation is more intense when the man who sets the taboo has a natural right, or has established a right, to property by bestowing labour upon it, than in the case where a man has arbitrarily laid claim to the article in question. The extent of differentiation depends, therefore, on the amount of original labour bestowed upon the property. The sense of justice begins to make itself felt. A conception of injustice would develop where a taboo was unreasonably placed on anything ; that is, where it was laid upon an article

having no customary or visible connection with the author of the taboo.

But, again, if a taboo be broken, the offender is affected psychologically by his fear, so that he suffers bodily and mentally on account of it. In his ignorance he immediately thinks that he is the subject of an invisible influence which is magical and irresistible in its work.

Consequently the taboo has a religious aspect as well, especially when a taboo is set by a priest. There is then unconsciously inculcated a fearful reverence for supernatural sanctions, which reverence, in its better form, is eminently useful when religion becomes more ethical. So the missionary finds that when he taboos anything it is looked upon as religiously sacred. The Bible becomes taboo and likewise the Sabbath Day, and both the Book and the Day are held in greater respect in Fiji than either in Europe or Australia. The apocalyptic Mount Sion is sacred in the same way. The sanctity of this religious taboo is broken when either the people disobey the precepts of the Bible, desecrate the Sabbath, or ignore the claims of the Better Land.

Unfortunately, that which is an aid to morality in some respects becomes a hindrance in others. For it is most difficult to get the Fijians to change the old, absolute idea of the taboo, for something which is more rational and adaptable. There is attaching to the Sabbath and the Bible something of a magical character, which gives rise to many unnecessary small



questions of casuistry. The missionary needs to be a master in the art of deciding so-called questions of conscience.

Still it is in Fiji that one can enjoy the Sabbath, for on that day scarce a sail is seen on the blue-green waters, nor does a spade touch soil ; the sound of the axe is not heard in the deep woods. If the native Christian is pharisaical to the point of refusing to pull a fruit from the tree, or eat a fish caught on Sunday, he does not, on the other hand, make the sacred season hideous with carousal, or secularise it until it loses altogether its religious significance. It is taboo.

## CHAPTER XV

### ETIQUETTE

THE Fijian is a model of good manners. It has been mentioned that he is ceremonious to a fault. As a supplement to that phase of his mental make-up we may say that he is amongst the most courteous of the South Sea Island peoples.

Fijian courtesy, however, is shown most carefully to those of high rank, and but indifferently to those of lower station. Good manners are the Fijians' expression of their reverence for the chieftains. The more we examine the ways in which etiquette shows itself, the more accurate does the foregoing statement appear.

It would be well-nigh impossible to exhaust the list of good manners, but the following will give a good idea of what it means to be "gentlemanly" in the Fiji Group.

The native deems it bad manners to intrude upon the sleep of a chief or white man. I have had the greatest difficulty in inducing him to awaken me in the early morning, even when it was necessary. When he did so it was with a soft, low call, which was scarcely calculated to awaken a heavy sleeper.

When two men meet in the pathway, the inferior stands on one side till the other passes. In addition, if the chief be very high in rank, the commoner will crouch to the ground, and utter a curious cry called the "*táma*." The same practice is observed when a superior overtakes an inferior. In case of necessity, the inferior will apologise in words such as the following, "*Au sa vósalévu, sáka*" (I am impudent, sir), while he proceeds ahead. The peculiar Fijian greeting of chiefs called the "*táma*" is almost a cry. A Fijian authority thus describes it:—

"The '*táma*' was different in different lands. At Mbau the '*táma*' of the men was thus—'*Mundúo-O*.' But the women, if there were many together and *Rándi ni Mbau*<sup>1</sup> or *Rándi Levúka*<sup>2</sup> approached, they would '*táma*' thus: '*Máinavákandú-A*.' But if any woman were going alone, and met a lady, she would '*táma*' thus: '*Vuá*.' The meaning of the '*táma*' is the morning salutation; it is impossible for the commoners to say '*Sa yándra*' to the chief, they '*táma*' instead. But should they meet after sunset or when it is night, they say thus: '*Sa mbóngi, sáka*' (it is night, sir). No man may '*táma*' twice, it would be the same as deriding the chief. Chiefs do not '*táma*' to chiefs. The women do not '*táma*' to chiefs, and men do not '*táma*' to ladies."<sup>3</sup>

The greeting of a commoner to a chief in Lau when night approaches is the very essence of courtliness.

<sup>1</sup> Chief lady of Mbau.

<sup>2</sup> Chief lady of Levúka.

<sup>3</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1911.

A man would not say "*Sa módhe*" (sleep), as he would greet his equal, but would make use of the phrase, "*Sa dhíri na vési.*" Literally this would mean, "the *vési*<sup>1</sup> drifts away."

In Kandávu, if a chief is sitting down, no one should pass behind him, or step over his legs when they are stretched out before him.<sup>2</sup> A commoner will not pass him in the pathway, or in a canoe at sea, without apologising. To impede the chief's progress is considered the height of ill-breeding.

The Réwa chiefs have a special kind of respect paid to them. A commoner must not on any account carry anything on the shoulder past their houses, nor is he allowed to go by the chief's residence with an umbrella open, or with any kind of sunshade. It is taboo also for a canoe to approach the chiefly town with the outrigger inshore, nor is it any less taboo for a man to appear in the presence of his superiors with a towel or any garment about his shoulders. Probably the latter custom is breaking down now that European singlets are being worn by the natives.

Mbau, which is the residence of the highest chiefs in Fiji, is naturally full of Fijian scruples with regard to etiquette. Should a chief be sitting upon the mats in his house, no one may pass him without uttering the word "*tilóu.*" If his back be towards the entrance, a stranger would not dream of proceeding into the

<sup>1</sup> The greenheart tree (*Afzelia bijuga*, A. Gray), the most highly-valued wood in the Fijian forest.

<sup>2</sup> In Samoa no one dares to step over the legs of a chief. Capt. J. R. Erskine, "Western Pacific Islands," p. 49.

midst of the house, neither would anyone touch an article in the house, without afterwards sitting down and clapping his hands. The name of this practice is "*Dhómbo*." In some places the underlings clap their hips. The origin of the latter custom is said to be that it proved in more savage times the absence of weapons. The same clapping of hands goes on when the superior has finished eating. An equal would not feel the necessity of clapping. Sitting on the door-step would not be tolerated a moment by anyone of chiefly rank.

Corroborative evidence from a native of Mbau is worth inserting here. Ndéve Tónganiválu, in an article written for the Fijian Society in Súva, says:—

“ Certain customs were unlawful (*támbu*) to be done at Mbau. (a) Having empty bows. If a canoe were being poled to Mbau it was ‘*támbu*’ for the bows to be empty : if there were no one in the bows it would be stoned out to sea. (b) Being outrigger towards. It was ‘*támbu*’ for the outrigger of canoes to be turned towards the land when being poled by the town. (c) It was ‘*támbu*’ for the ‘*uluvuso*’ (the foaming bow) to be presented towards the land when a sailing canoe arrived at Mbau. (d) It was ‘*támbu*’ for any canoe to have a flag, unless there was a chief on board. (e) It was ‘*támbu*’ to wear a train. (f) It was ‘*támbu*’ to use the fan palm frond as an umbrella. (g) It was ‘*támbu*’ to wear a shoulder scarf. All these things were unlawful to be done at Mbau ; they were lawful (*tára*) to be done only by

the high chiefs, and by those who were great ' *vdsu* ' to Mbau." <sup>1</sup>

The drinking of the *yanggóna* has given rise to certain customs of etiquette. No man is allowed to lie down while the chief drinks the liquor. During the ceremony, when one of the number assembled desires to cross to the other side of the house, he must first of all touch the rim of the dish which holds the *yanggóna*, or the rope by which the dish is usually hung up, and then pass over.

Many of the above customs are to be found in other parts of Fiji; and generally throughout the Group the natives give honour wherever it is due. In their ordinary conversation one will hear the Fijian equivalent of "sir" constantly used. Strong language is not heard except when a man is very angry. Men count it a great shame to be insulted in conversation, and they would sooner receive a blow than be called by any one of the vile epithets which an angry Fijian knows so well how to use. Another great insult is to be pointed at with the index finger. I have been in a house when a man, who was usually mild in his manner, spoke most angrily to another who had treated him so. Men speak little with married women. If they were to do so, probably a scandal would immediately arise.

An additional phase of Fijian courtesy is their great unwillingness to break news which might be unwelcome. And, if one were to report to another good news, the latter would assume an air of innocence so as to give

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1911.

the former the pleasure of conveying the pleasant information. It is reported that when the Rev. J. Carey went to the chief Túiniyáu with pleasant news, the latter, though he had heard it six days beforehand, would not think of telling this to the missionary, "Because," said he, "I would not be so disrespectful." He thought it would not please Mr. Carey if that gentleman found he was the bearer of second-hand reports. It is an integral part of their courtesy that the Fijians shall not tell to one another, face to face, what would be likely either to give pain or lessen joy.

Now the fact just mentioned has wide-reaching results, since the native is often led thereby to sacrifice truth to courtesy. Prof. Macmillan Brown, in a lecture on the Chinese, said that they were a race of liars.<sup>1</sup> The following sentence is an extract from the newspaper report of his lecture: "The Orientals, even the most intellectual and wisest, were satisfied with illusions. They found no shame in lying, and, in fact, found it rather meritorious." Mr. Hobhouse reports the same of the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego. The like character is attributed to the ancient Greeks, who considered a lie to be rather clever, provided it was not found out. Many people have said the same of the Fijians. It is perhaps true that they are an explicit example of the doctrine of extreme mental reservation.

They lie, yet it may be doubted whether they lie always in our sense of the term; that is, it is to be questioned if they deliberately lie from an immoral

<sup>1</sup> Lecture delivered in Sydney, 1908.

motive. I am convinced that their inordinate love of courtesy, and their diplomatic form of etiquette, are at the root of many of their evasions and misstatements, and the fact that they consider it no shame to sacrifice truth to good manners may be attributed to their love of standing well with their fellow-men.

Diplomacy was demonstrated in clever cock-and-bull stories which the chief's messengers were in the habit of inventing. Suppose a message is to be delivered to a chief; if there be others in the room the messenger will concoct a most plausible tale with not an atom of truth in it, really for the consumption of those whose business it was not, lest his master should be brought to shame, or be injured politically. "Adroitness in lying is attained by the constant use made of it to conceal the schemes and plots of the chiefs, to whom a really clever liar is a valuable acquisition."<sup>1</sup> It was virtue for a messenger thus to hide the truth; and he was reckoned the cleverest who could dissemble the best.

Fijians will not divulge one another's private business. To do so would be very bad manners. An amusing illustration of this fact occurred some time ago at the Mission station in Kandávu. One of my boys wished to go to his town, and another lad told me of it. When I questioned my informant as to the reason, he said he did not know, at the same time assuming a most un intelligent aspect. I then called the boy in, and inquired of him personally the reason of his desire to

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Thos. Williams, "Fiji and the Fijians," p. 107.



return home. But he remained silent. Thereupon his companion, who had already said he did not know, took a kind of tacit permission from the silence of his friend and said, "Allow me to explain, sir. He wants to get married." He could not have told me this piece of news until it was obvious that his friend was in a dilemma. The foregoing characteristic is not exclusively Fijian. Dr. Nassau, speaking of the Mi Amie people in Africa, states that where they say "I don't know," when they do know, it is not with them a lie in the strongest sense of the term. It means simply, "I am not at liberty to tell." The illustration given above shows that no great sense of condemnation attaches to a negative answer advanced in place of a positive one, if diplomacy or courtesy countenance the action.

If a stranger is asking Fijians for information, it is necessary for him to be full of guile in order to hide his purpose. Were one's predilections not so hidden, the Fijian would quickly discern them and answer in harmony with them. His standard of good manners would lead him to say exactly what would please the interrogator. This, again, is not peculiarly Fijian. Prof. Max Muller refers to the huge Sanscrit frauds perpetrated on Lieutenant Willcox in India, simply because his desires for a particular class of information were all too obvious.

In the same way, a native will not contradict his superior when the latter makes a mistake ; but he will respond with the words, "True, sir." He is not

concerned as to whether the chief is correctly informed or not, but he is very much concerned that his words shall please the chief. Over and over again I have been allowed to find out with trouble and weariness to myself things that could have been made clear to me by a word. A similar statement is made by Mrs. Smythe in her book, "Ten Months in Fiji." "A Fijian will not correct you when you make a mistake ; so long as he is polite, his end is served." Also the Rev. J. Carey asserts that "one must pretend ignorance in a chief's presence to please him."<sup>1</sup> The following statement supports the quotations already given. "Politeness is a great deceiver. Custom may compel to praise another for form's sake, when he deserves no praise ; and to thank him when he deserves no thanks."<sup>2</sup>

How easy it is, then, for the Fijian people to learn the art of lying ! Fijian children quickly acquire the fatal gift, and are adepts in telling falsehoods without stirring a muscle of their faces. The longer they live the cleverer they become, unless they are brought strongly under the influence of religion.

Only too often do they find that lying is successful in achieving selfish ends, so that they are encouraged to lie even when it is not to the real advantage of the liar.

The process then is, that the barrier between truth and falsehood is broken down by the system of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Carey, "Kings of the Reef," p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Westermarck, "Origin of the Moral Ideas," p. 160.

courtesy and diplomacy existent in Fijian society ; after which the practice of lying is aggravated by its extension to every part of life.

It is a great triumph for Christianity when a man is produced who will not under any circumstances utter that which he knows to be false. It is a miracle of modern times. As an instance of what has been accomplished, a native minister was subpœnaed to give evidence in a court of law. While in the witness-box he kissed the Bible, and promised to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. To his credit be it said, he gave his evidence without the slightest equivocation, even when some of the highest chiefs in the land used all their powerful influence to make him commit perjury. This was a very severe trial to such a man under the best of circumstances. Undeterred, however, by his natural respect and fear of his superiors, he answered boldly, " I am here not to please man, but God. I am here to tell what I know according to the truth that is in me."

Men after this type are not few in Fiji, though the circumstances which reveal their integrity do not often occur.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TRUTH, CONSCIENCE AND CRIME

THAT the Fijian has comparatively confused ideas of what truth is, we may gather from his vague conceptions of the nature of falsehood. The word, "*Lásu*" is the term he uses for "lie." But this same term has a most varied and wide application. It is *lásu* to tell a deliberate untruth, to carry a false story, to make a wrong statement even when it is believed to be true, to break a promise wittingly or unwittingly, to be inaccurate in ordinary conversation, to miss a mark, as when a boy throwing a spear misses his aim. Obviously the idea of gross falsity is not so powerful as to demand a special term.

The difference between a cool, unblushing lie and an innocent misstatement of truth is not clearly perceived ; and this probably arises because the Fijians, like most simple-minded peoples, take into account the explicit action more than the hidden motive ; and, secondly, because untruth, whether intentional or not, carries with it a kind of infection like taboo. The difficulty that the native finds in appreciating the difference between a lie and a misstatement is similar to that which

the primitive mind meets in its endeavour to distinguish accidental homicide from deliberate murder.

It is quite doubtful whether an abstraction of truth is possible to the Fijian. In mental calibre he is but a child, who looks at the world as an aggregate of little pieces. He has negligible power of unification, and less gift for abstraction. On one occasion I asked a class to give me a definition of love. The answers given were in the form of concrete examples as, for instance, (a) "If a man comes to me and I help him"; (b) "God loved us and gave His Son for us."

The universe is called by these Pacific Islanders "all the things." There is apparently no idea of uniting "all the things" in a single system. The abstraction of truth is a still more difficult generalisation which comes after moral training, and after a system of morality has become objective.

The native has a rough idea of what is true in concrete cases, when he is able to compare the question under immediate observation with concrete standards. An English farmer, in former times, knew when his wooden tally corresponded with that of his debtor or creditor, and yet, perhaps, a theory of commerce or bookkeeping was far beyond him. So it is with the Fijian in the moral sphere. Consequently, there could be no development of a noble idea of truth in his mind. The reference was never made to any law within, or to any guiding principle; but to expediency, to outward contingencies, to a taboo, a command, threat, or promise of a chief, or to a precedent of some kind.

At the present time the natives of the Group are in the moral school, learning the difficult task of judging according to principles, as well as to concrete codes or decrees ; and he finds the process irksome in the extreme. In earlier days "out of sight" of the code meant "away with the necessity of abiding by it." If he could do a wrong thing without being seen, or without meeting with any resultant evil, all was well.

As a consequence of his moral deficiency, there is no word for conscience in the Fijian's vocabulary. The word used in the Bible to express the idea of an inward monitor is, "*Na lewa e loma*" (judgment within). But this phrase only confuses the native who has not been developed under Christian teaching, for to him, in his native state, there is no standard whereby the wrongness or otherwise of an action can be decided within his spirit. And there are very few to-day who can give a clear definition of what the "*Lewa e loma*" is. For most natives, the phrase is a very wide term embracing all their decisions, however unimportant they may be from the standpoint of ethics. That is to say, the words referred to have no specific reference to the moral quality of an action. The same objection may be made to another phrase which, I discovered, was also used for "conscience," viz., "*Ai vakavuvuli e loma*" (the teacher within).

We are not surprised to find, therefore, that there is not in the native's mind that abhorrence of wrong which depends not upon public opinion, but on an

inner concept of truth. Incarceration within a jail has not for him the shame that it has for a member of a higher race. Prisoners and criminals, when they are met by their fellows, are treated without shrinking ; there is no cleavage of common interests, or straining of friendship's ties. Those who obey the law have not even yet come to the point when they debar from their society those who are admittedly open law-breakers.

The sense of shame is deepest after the discovery of wrong-doing. This fact alone proves that conscience, as the ethicist understands it, has only been partially developed. The deep consciousness of shame which we generally expect to find in a man of mature character who falls into wrong-doing, is dependent for its intensity first of all, upon the recognition of a worthy ideal, and the conception of truth as an abstract principle, or as identified with the will of God ; secondly, the subject should be in the habit of contrasting himself and his character with his ideal. Now the Fijian's ideal is not high, and, as he has not yet learned to realise or conceive the principle of truth as an abstraction, his conscience, being without a suitable or sufficient sphere, is necessarily immature in its development. Instead of a high moral standard within the soul which would be worthy of the name of conscience, the Fijian has had a substitute in the will of some other person superior to himself either in rank or age. When a delinquent is brought before his chief, he trembles, and is at the moment sincere in his repentance. If he is able to pass through the ordeal without severe punishment,

he becomes blithe and gay, evidently considering his misdeed no greater than the penalty meted out.

Confession is seldom made unless in sickness, or through fear of imminent discovery. Times of sickness are the occasions when a native of Fiji feels most keenly a sense of his wrong course of life. He begins immediately to cross-question himself as to whether or not he is guilty of some sin which is, in the hands of God, the cause of his misfortune. Mr. Jevons notices a similar phenomenon in Tahiti. "Sickness was the occasion for making reparation for past sins, *e.g.*, by restoring stolen property."<sup>1</sup>

A very remarkable case occurred in the year 1916 which illustrates the truth of the foregoing remarks. The wife of a native missionary was returning home to Fiji from New Guinea, where her husband had died while performing his missionary duties. Her people lived in Kandávu, some sixty miles from the capital. The woman, together with her little son, embarked at Súva in a cutter, for the purpose of returning to her relatives. Some time after they had left the anchorage in the harbour, a storm arose, and the waves began to dash over the vessel. One wave larger than usual caught the boy and swept him overboard. The captain very bravely leaped into the boiling sea to rescue the lad. He succeeded in reaching him, but, unfortunately, the men on the cutter were unable, on account of the strong wind, to bring the cutter about. The captain clung to his charge for some

<sup>1</sup> "Introduction to Religion," p. 111.



time, until a huge ocean shark came and snatched the boy from his grasp. Horrified by the event, and expecting every moment that other sharks would seize him, the man struggled on in the midst of the waves. It was three hours before the vessel returned to the spot, and by good fortune the crew were able to save the captain. No sooner, however, had he got on board than he looked round on the crew and passengers with almost the air of a judge, as he asked, "Who is responsible for this?" Forthwith the mother of the lad that was drowned fell upon her face on the deck, and confessed her wrong-doing in New Guinea before she left that country. All the people on the cutter were immediately at rest in their minds, accepting the occurrence as fully explained, and as inevitable under the circumstances.

The following instance is an additional evidence of the readiness of the Fijian to confess when broken by sickness or trouble :

A member of one of the mission churches in the Group was stricken down by sickness. She had almost come to her last gasp. Feeling that death was upon her, she confessed to having sinned some months before. Up to that time she bore a good character. Such cases might be multiplied indefinitely.

Considering how prevalent is the tendency or trait of the Fijian people to look on the chiefly authority as their standard of life, it is little short of a marvel that we can find men such as the native minister whom I introduced towards the end of the last chapter. Yet

he is not alone, for, throughout the Group, there are to be found men of outstanding righteousness, men who have won not only respect amongst their own kind, but from white people who have no particular interest in missions. There have been constantly found those who have been patient in tribulation, enduring hardships without a murmur, living long lives of usefulness and ardent devotion to their religion, finally passing away, wearing, we might almost say, "the white flower of a blameless life."

In a more general way also, there has been a marked improvement in the morality of the Fijian people. Let anyone read the Rev. T. Williams's account of early native life, and he will discover that these islanders were characterised by the worst of crimes. Murder, fornication, suicide, parricide, matricide, and infanticide were quite common. Religious ceremonies of a vile nature were rife. Unbridled cruelty was thrown into dark relief only by the occasional games and sports of various kinds. Since the British Government took control of the colony, and since British missionaries began to work amongst the people, most of these horrible crimes have been abolished. Murder, suicide, and burglary are comparatively unknown. Petty larceny of food and small articles is found, especially amongst those who come in contact with the lower class of whites in the centres of population. Apart from immorality, no very serious crimes are committed. The majority of prisoners in the jails are Indians. Those Fijians who have been put in

prison are there for petty breaches of the law involving no strictly moral principle. They are incarcerated for not paying taxes, disobedience to orders, carelessness in the use of fire, omission to pay dog-licences, etc. The absence of serious crime is striking. A magistrate who had under him more than 6,000 people, often could not find enough prisoners to keep his compound clean. Considering the easy-going nature of the native, one would expect that there would be many serious breaches of the moral law. The phenomenon may be accounted for by (a) a lack of courage to take the great risks involved in evil-doing ; (b) the institution of a just government ; (c) his long training in submission to the powers that be ; (d) his reverential respect for a religion which has been the most potent factor in delivering him from the bondage of barbarism.

Of all the great crimes that the Fijian was in the habit of committing, there remains in full strength the sin of immorality. Sin of the sexual type appeals to a character weakened by a luxurious climate and by a poor social environment. In former times, the chiefs kept it down by club-law, because it infringed upon their chiefly right to numbers of concubines. Now that marriage with one wife has become the rule, and club-law has been abolished, there seems no bar to the growth of the evil except in the condemnation of it by religious teachers.

The sex question is one of the most serious problems that have to be dealt with at the present time. The Fijian's animal nature is like his summer days, hot,

passionate, and over-mastering. The amount of sexual immorality and promiscuous intercourse during the past forty years is appalling. Some of the chiefs have been the principal offenders in this direction. One chief made a vow that he would not rest until he had despoiled all the girls in his town ; and he pretty nearly accomplished his fell purpose.

With regard to the rank and file, the custom of the sexes living together in one house accounts, in these days, for a great deal of impurity, especially as Fijian houses rarely have more than one compartment. If we also take into consideration that the people have the smallest amount of clothing upon them, particularly when they go to work in the gardens, we can scarcely be surprised at the evil results. Until the conditions of the houses are made better, and until the clothing of the native becomes less scanty, we cannot hope for much diminution in this great vice. The wonder is that so many are enabled, by their belief in religion, to keep clear of the vile octopus that has seized the race. The sanctity of the marriage bond has been respected in a most remarkable way by hundreds and thousands of these tyros in the laws of morality. It is an outstanding testimony to the power of a great religion that the best of the Fijian race are making these successful attempts to stem the flood of evil that sweeps daily over them.

All such cases of successful moral achievement warrant us in hoping that the peculiar character of the Fijian has the possibility of rising to an estimable moral height.

## CHAPTER XVII

### SUPERSTITION—SIGNS AND OMENS

WHEREVER the scientific mind is absent, there superstition abounds. It gradually grows into a chain that holds the people in dire bondage. So exacting do the superstitions of the people become that even their daily pursuits are dominated by them from beginning to end. To those who look upon the Fijian from without, the signs and omens by which he is wont to govern himself do not appear. But to those who know the language and who take the trouble to inquire, a mass of curious beliefs is revealed which well repays the labour involved.

It has usually been thought that superstition is full of terror to those who are in bondage to it. And to a certain extent that is true. But, with respect to the Fijian, it would be erroneous to say that all his superstitious practices bring nothing but fear. On the contrary, some afford him a large amount of lively pleasure as well as peace of mind. To leave these practices undone would place the Fijian in a state which would be intolerable. His fixed idea is that he would be the victim of unnumbered evils leaping from the unseen, were he to neglect the ordinary

precautions which his fathers had handed down to him. When he has done all that custom requires, his mind is at rest. On the other hand, some of his beliefs bring him much mental suffering; and, in the case where sympathetic magic is brought into operation, he often falls into sickness and death.

*Superstitions regarding Planting.*

In the description of the Fijians' superstitious beliefs and practices, we shall begin with those connected with planting. Throughout Fiji there can easily be found, even in these days, natives who believe that the welfare of plants, trees, and vegetables depends upon conditions which have no real connection with plant-life. Rain and sunshine are not under-estimated, but it is thought that magical conditions may be set up which will ensure success in gardening. And just as many of our own race throw a pinch of salt over their shoulder when the salt-cellar is capsized, and are ill at ease if they omit this, or turn over their money when the new moon appears, so the native feels he must take certain precautions for his plants and trees if he would avoid disaster in his garden. With the Fijian, however, the position is more accentuated than with us, because his belief is more intense.

In Réwa and other parts, the "úto" (breadfruit) is treated thus:—When the male flower catkin falls to the ground for the first time in the season, it is thrown about in sport, after which the owner takes an empty cocoa-nut and hangs it on the branch of the breadfruit

tree. The name given to the cocoa-nut used is *Ai vákadhóa*." Its virtue is supposed to be effective in causing the tree to be very fruitful.

At Mba the old men say that when a breadfruit tree is planted, the one who plants it in the ground must on no account drink boiled water, whether in the form of soups, broths, or other decoctions. If he does so, the tree will surely die.

Another practice in connection with the breadfruit tree is found at Veráta, where the first fruit, when it appears on the branch, is carefully covered, so that it will not fall to the ground. When that particular fruit is ripe, they boil it whole, and then break it into small pieces so that everybody in the house may eat of it. The people think that in this way the tree will become fruitful. A similar practice is followed by the inhabitants of Réwa with regard to a cocoa-nut tree which fruits for the first time.

Some natives in Réwa, Yásawas, and Mba hold the plantain in great estimation as food ; and, when they plant one, they throw a stick at it to make it fructify.

In Mádhuáta, corn is supposed to be better planted after the gardener has had a large meal. The connection between the ideas of plenty and a large meal is apparent. So with sugar-cane in some districts ; and the natives used to think it better to set it in the ground at the full moon, or when the tide was full.

The people of Nausóri say that an unfruitful cocoa-nut may be made fruitful by entwining around it a vine called "*Mbúlimbúli-siváro*" (*Hoya bicarinata*),

which does not die when taken from the parent stem. The same community, and many others besides, had a curious custom which they followed in former times with the object of making the yams bear well. They first of all cut up the yams for planting and put them in a heap. Then they went into the woods and brought the leaves of the "*Láta*" (*Plectranthus Forsteri*), "*Walái*" (*Entada scandens*), and the "*Mbúa*" (*Fagraea Berteriana*), and crushed these up in water. They then sprinkled the water over the heap of yams preparatory to planting. Subsequently, when they had placed the seed-yam in the earth, they stuck two pieces of *láta* in the corners of the garden, to windward of it, which they imagined to be a fine preventive of a bad season. The name of the sticks so set up is "*i ndranúmi*."

A hungry man in the woods of Víti Lévu will pluck the leaves of the tree called "*Nggáviláwa*" and throw them in the air. Should they scatter, the food is cooked at home, and the man will repair thither.

A curious superstition holds good with some inhabitants of the Lau district. If a plantain breaks off of itself, there will be a death at sea.

### *Celestial Signs.*

Celestial omens are numerous. A large ring around the moon prognosticates the death of a high chief. At Lau and Kandávu a broken rainbow in the afternoon is sure to be the precursor of wind, rain, or storm.



Nothing more definite in meaning could appear than a comet. When Halley's comet shone over the Group in 1910, everybody was of the opinion that something important would happen on account of it. Nor were they greatly surprised to hear that King Edward VII had passed away. The comet was the harbinger of his death.

December, 1914, was marked by a very brilliant meteor, which broke over the main island of Fiji with a loud report. The whole landscape was lit up as by a gigantic arc lamp. Natives shouted out in astonishment. One came running to me shortly afterwards, and, with pallid countenance, asked the reason. Old wiseacres prophesied the death of a chief. Strangely enough, within a week or two, Rátu Kandávu Lévu, their highest chief, a man in the prime of life, died suddenly. In the Fijian mind the explanation was quite clear.

That same year brought also to Fiji an extraordinary rainfall. For weeks at a time the sun would scarcely shine on the earth. Many natives were quite confident that the great European War had magically caused the excessive downpour.

### *Travelling Signs.*

Travelling carries with it many little yet strange ideas which maintain a resolute hold on the native mind. The creaking of a rudder is a bad sign, and some old men will shake their heads ominously when they hear it. The black crane does duty as a bird of ill omen

to sailors. Its appearance is certain to provoke the alarmist to dark forebodings. If one should appear on the setting out of a boat or canoe, the crew would cry out, "*Mai kimúri*" (Come behind). They think that if it were to cross the bow of the boat, a bad voyage would be their lot. Nothing pleases them better than to see it fly swiftly ahead without crossing the vessel's course. In that case the crane becomes a bird of good omen.

There are certain local travelling signs in Vanúa Lévú, which have their counterparts in nearly every district in Fiji. For instance, a snake lying across the pathway is a trustworthy hint of trouble ahead. The same remark equally applies to a bad stumble, or a rat running athwart the track. These point to some evil in the village to which the travellers are journeying.

Láuans also fear the rat. They say that, if one should run across the pathway from the left to the right, it is a sign of death. Also, should a water-snake swim in front of a vessel when sailing, evil will result.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout Fiji, sailors used to point sticks or oars at a rain-storm, in the belief that they could so disperse it; even to-day the old men will do this. It is a most amusing sight when a grey-haired individual will solemnly take up a piece of wood and aim it at a dark cloud on the horizon.

When a chief travelled by sea, there was usually an old retainer who made it his business to call the wind,

<sup>1</sup> The counterparts of all these omens are found in Samoa. Dr. G. Brown, "*Melanesians and Polynesians*," pp. 174-5.

if there were not sufficient to drive the boat. He used a curiously monotonous cry, which he repeated at intervals with slight variations. It ran as follows :—  
*“ Mai vóndo, mai vóndo, vóndo mai na maráma mai Óno.”* (Come aboard, come aboard, come aboard the lady from Óno).

### *Superstitions about Children.*

The souls and lives of children have been always the centre around which a good deal of superstitious belief was wont to cling. A few cases will be sufficient.

In Tálaulía, Kandávu, a woman gave birth to a child. When the infant was ten days old, the women of the village, together with the relations of the mother, anointed themselves profusely with cocoa-nut oil. Then they entered the house, and all sat down for some time. Meanwhile, a fire had been lit outside. When a sufficient period had elapsed, the women took the mother and child into the open air, and began to go round and round the fire, and sometimes to step over it. The custom is called *“ Kaláwa mbúka ”* (Stepping the fire), and is probably a purification ceremony. The women thought that they were taking the best precautions to make the child strong.

What might be termed a development of the foregoing practice used to be followed in Yakíta, Kandávu, a town not far from Tálaulía. When the child was ten days old, a Fijian earthenware vessel was brought into the house, and a fire lit within it. Then one of the relations took the baby in her arms and waved it

towards the fire several times. When this operation was completed, a man in full war-dress smote the vessel with a club, breaking it to atoms.

It is always reckoned a risky thing to take children into the woods for the first time. In Ra, on one occasion, when ten women, accompanied by a young boy, took a woodland path, five of them went before him and five in the rear. All of them plucked leaves of reeds, and, after tying them in knots, scattered them in the pathway. When asked the reason, they said it was to preserve the soul of the child. A quantity of these knotted reeds was recently noticed in Ono by one whose word I can trust. He stated that they were thrown there for the same purpose.

A striking illustration of a similar superstition happened in connection with our own household. My wife and our Fijian nurse-girl took our baby daughter into the woods for an outing. In the evening, when, on their return, they had just left the edge of the trees, the girl turned round and called out loudly into the wood the name of the baby. This she did again and again. She explained her action afterwards, when interrogated as to the reason, by saying that she was calling back the soul of the child.

### *Superstitions referring to Sneezing.*

Sneezing has always been ominous amongst most primitive peoples.<sup>1</sup> It is especially so in Fiji. Whether

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Samoans. Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," pp. 240, 250.

or not the soul is thought to escape through the nostrils with the violent expulsion of breath cannot be certainly known. The probability is that such is the case. In Fiji, a sneeze at a graveside is an unpardonable offence, and invariably the natives believe that a death will follow. Hence, in former times, children were not taken to the graveside. In Lau, sneezing in one's sleep was a sign of death, and, if a person sneezed at the right hand of a warrior, war was imminent.

There is a local idea in some parts of Fiji that should a man sneeze when a fish is being cut up, he must flick his nose to obviate the mischief accruing.

When a chief indulges in a sneeze, an inferior will always say "*Mbúla*" (life, or live), to which the chief will graciously answer "*Móli*" (thanks).

### *Yanggóna Superstitions.*

The *Yanggóna* ceremony is one of the most intense of all Fijian functions. While it is being performed there is no thought for anything but the right conduct of it. The man appointed to make and strain the drink is, for the time being, transformed into a different person, and it would be a great shame to him, and indeed to all present, if anything were to go wrong. Everyone assembled would be shocked if a man were to sneeze accidentally when the cup was being handed to the chief. The only way to avoid subsequent evil in that case would be for the unlucky delinquent to leave the house immediately.

Similarly, the *yanggóna* chant must proceed correctly. A mistake in the chanting would indicate some mischief approaching. The liquid, when being poured from one cup to another, must on no account be spilled on the ground. It is the auspice of good for the concoction to flow safely from one vessel to another.

In the *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, Rátu Ravúlo, a prominent Fijian, describes the drinking ceremony for a chief who is to be received into the position of *Vúniválu*<sup>1</sup> of Mbau in the clan of Túikámba. The vein of superstition is seen running right through the account :—

“ Those who prepare and serve the *yanggóna* wear ornamental bandages (called ‘*vésa*’) below the knees and above the elbows made of a vine called ‘*wákalóu*’ (*Lygodictyon Forsteri*).<sup>2</sup> The mouth of the water-jar has also a ‘*vésa*.’ The meaning of the ‘*wákalóu*’ ornaments is that the government may not become loosened or separated, and that the land be not divided, as that vine, the ‘*wákalóu*,’ was used in the heathen temples, being plaited along the top of the house. In preparing the *yanggóna* the rootlets must not be split, the reason of this prohibition being lest the government be split up. It was also forbidden for the solid root of the *yanggóna* to be split, the reason of this ‘*támbu*’ also being lest there should arise divisions in the land. The *yanggóna* had to be all cut crosswise.

<sup>1</sup> War Lord.

<sup>2</sup> The botanical name was not in the original account.

“When the *yanggóna* straining was finished, the heathen priest stood up to present the cup. When the hand-clapping (*dhómbo*) for the *yanggóna* was over, then the priest stood up and took the cup and went and stood at the edge of the *yanggóna* bowl, and he who strained the *yanggóna* took another cup to use as a ladle; he ladled three times, lifting very small quantities and holding the cup in both hands, and poured it into the cup held by the priest. When the cup was emptied once into the cup held by the priest, the priest stood upright to offer the dedicatory prayer, in which he mentioned all the names of all the devils or original gods of the various lands. The priest dedicated thrice as the *yanggóna* was ladled. On the third occasion the cup which was used as ladle was turned right over, so as to be emptied completely, and then allowed to drop between the priest's arms, as he was holding his cup by both edges. The reason for this dropping the cup was to typify that the whole government of the land was handed over. When the cup fell they made the supreme obeisance or salutation (*táma*), thus: ‘*E ndína, ie, ía tu, a tu yáni ki dhákè le, ie ía.*’<sup>1</sup> He then stood up and went and poured the *yanggóna* into the cup of the chief for whom the drinking ceremony was made, and having poured it he dropped the cup between the arms of the chief and caught it again below, that it might not fall right down. The meaning of the cup being dropped between the arms of the chief and then being caught

<sup>1</sup> “True it is that he stands above there.” Approx. meaning.

below is this: That the government of the land was now given once for all to him, and that no decision proceeding from him might fall to the ground or be neglected. Having poured the *yanggóna* and dropped the cup and caught it below, he then waited facing the chief until he took the cup from his mouth. Then the second cup was presented to Tu-ni-Tóngá, the principal '*máta-ni-vanúa*,' by some young man, the priest's duty having terminated with his presenting the *yanggóna* to the chief for whom the ceremony was held.

"Then when the chief had drunk they all '*dhómbo*' (that is, clapped hands in a certain way), the significance of which was that they had given to him to be the head of all councils concerning great matters of war and all great matters about which they consult together, that the decision might come from him as to whether the things would take place or not, according to their having made him head or leader. And from that day he was called by the name of the '*Vúniválu*.' " <sup>1</sup>

### *Superstitions concerning Animals.*

The independent actions of certain animals have always been the forerunners of trouble. For example, the cry of the owl at night, the loud mewling of the wild cat, the crowing hen, are all calculated to send quaking fear into a superstitious Fijian mind.

Should a cat by chance lap *yanggóna* in a house

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society, 1912-13.*



while rain is falling without, there will be a drought. So the people think in parts of Lómaivíti.

When a bird flies low along the ground, it betokens death drawing near to someone in the village.

### *Miscellaneous Superstitions.*

There are several ways of knowing when people are talking against one. An itchy nose, the biting of the tongue at meals, a burning ear, show clearly that a man's enemy is maligning him.

The Fijian housewife says she believes harm is near when a pot breaks, or the string round its neck snaps, of its own accord.

A native will tell you that to step on a stone when your foot is asleep will free your future from threatening danger.

A gravedigger would be greatly concerned were his spade or knife to break while he was digging a grave.

A golden sunset foretells very dry weather.

Very many more curious beliefs might be added to these. It will be enough, however, to describe the great "*Ndráunikáu*" superstition which holds Fiji in its fearful grasp even at the present time.

### *The Ndráunikáu Superstition.<sup>1</sup>*

The practice is that of sympathetic magic, and similar beliefs may be found all over the world. Those who make use of it in Fiji are amongst the darkest-

<sup>1</sup> In New Britain a practice almost exactly similar is found, called *agagara*. Dr. G. Brown, "*Melanesians and Polynesians*," p. 233.

mind of the race. It is their usage to take the remains of food, clothing, or tobacco which have been left by their enemy. With these they mix certain leaves, and slugs from the sea. The manner of treatment varies with the locality and with the character of the men who give themselves to work evil magic. Sometimes they boil the mixture, or they use it just as it is. At any rate, they carry the mixture to the woods, and there put it in empty cocoa-nuts, pieces of bamboo, or native jars. Then, dressed in native cloth, they bury the vessel or vessels, at the same time muttering curses and incantations, so that, as the mixture ferments, their enemies may become ill and die. There is supposed to be a close correspondence between the fermentation and the progress of the sickness.

A simpler form of magic is to bury the leaf near a man's house or garden, where its very proximity is supposed to bring him evil.

Doubtless, it is part of the plan to let the fated one know somehow what is going on. In many cases the effect is swift and fearful. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the pernicious result is, at first, purely mental, though it quickly brings on bodily disorders.

It is surprising to note that many of the best of the Fijian race cannot tear themselves away from the fear engendered by this remarkable magic. It is sufficient even for them to know that magic has been practised against them, and they will succumb to it, though it may be a sheer fiction of the imagination.

Even Christians, who would on no account indulge themselves in *ndráunikáu* practices, and who regularly preach against them, are yet afraid of them.

One of my native ministers lay on his back for six weeks because he imagined that the enmity of another Fijian had taken this form. I paid him a special visit and reprimanded him kindly, pointing out that the religion of Christianity gave freedom from such ignoble fear. The little interview had the desired effect, and, in a short while, he resumed his duties.

Another native assistant, an eloquent preacher and a man of fine sensibilities, confessed that he believed fully in the fatal influences of *ndráunikáu*.

On one occasion I urged a student to get someone to try the sorcerer's devices on me, so that I might disprove to him the whole thing. Whereupon he answered that white men are different from the Fijian. "The native mind," said he, "cannot resist it."

A girl who worked in the kitchen of the mission house suddenly got the idea into her mind that she was stricken down by *ndráunikáu*. On no account would she get up, though we used every argument we could think of. Then my wife and I knelt beside her bed and prayed for her, and the effect was instantaneous. In a short time she was back at her work.

As against these cases, it should be mentioned that there are many natives who, through the virtue of Christianity, are quite delivered from the thralldom of the superstition. Like an evil bird of prey, it has for ages gripped the nation with its talons, and now,

at last, the talons are beginning to unclasp. One very striking instance was that of Mátaiási Vávi, a native minister, whose record is of a high order. It happened that he was visiting a certain town in which was an unused house-foundation that had been the place where a sorcerer lived. The wizard was now dead, and the villagers, in deadly fear of his spirit, neglected the foundation-site of the house, for they believed it to be haunted. Mátaiási, on inquiry, discovered the reason of their neglect. Forthwith he made as if to go to the mound. "Stop," said they, "he will kill you." Without deigning to reply, Mátaiási showed his complete emancipation from the ancient dread by deliberately climbing on to the site; and he stood there smiling down upon them, with his arms folded.

The Government of Fiji have made it an offence against the State to engage in any wizardry which has nocuous effects on the native mind.

There is a curious application of *ndráunikáu* in the province of Mba. The natives engage young men, who claim to have the powers of the Fijian witch-doctor, to bury leaves around their yam gardens. In one case, ten young men were proffered feasts for their services in this direction. On this occasion, no action was taken by the Government because no human life was threatened.

It will naturally be asked whether the Fijians have any charm by which the evil influences of the *ndráunikáu* can be warded off. Such a mascot they have selected in the leaves of certain trees, amongst them being the

“ *Snungānga* ” (*Exccæcaria Agallocha*), the “ *Mátaméra ngginggi*,” the “ *Kálambúdhí*,” and the “ *Sásanggílu*.” Without exception, the leaves of these trees are pungent, acrid, or bitter. The native belief is that, if they chew these leaves, they can suffer no harm, and, by preserving some in their houses, they will be immune.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FISHING AND ITS SUPERSTITIONS

To say that the waters of Fiji teem with fish is a commonplace. Yet few people realise how plentiful the scaly denizens of the deep really are in that beautiful group of islands. Every little nook and cranny of the never-ending coral reef affords a home for some kind of life. It is marvellous what wonders they can reveal to him who knows how and where to look. A little effort will yield much even to the uninitiated. I have sometimes taken up a piece of broken coral out of the shallows, and found clinging to it numbers of dainty creatures of every conceivable hue. Amongst them are to be seen the most brilliant green, and blue, and yellow fish ; it almost seems a pity to call them by their common name. On the other hand, one suddenly happens on the most awful monstrosities that could be imagined. And between these two extremes may be placed all those piscatorial species which the Fijian knows so well, and which he is so skilful in catching.

Fishing in Fiji was at one time carried on by professional clans, who were well plied by their chiefs with food and *yanggóna* as a reward for their labours.

In Mbau, the ancient clan still follows its pursuit, but in these days the occupation has fallen principally into the hands of the women ; probably because, under the Government *régime*, they have more daily leisure than the men.

Hand-line fishing in deep water is still the occupation of the men, and, in connection therewith, there are some interesting superstitions. If a man is preparing his bait (cuttle-fish,<sup>1</sup> cockles, young mullet, etc.), and has it lying in a heap before him, no other person may carelessly step over it. If he should do so, the owner of the bait would be justifiably angry, for no fish would take an infected lure. In the same category is the belief that no stranger should walk over the fishing-line. A poor catch inevitably follows. Likewise, when a man is setting out on an excursion he desires nothing so earnestly as that you shall not wish him good luck. For were you to do so, that invaluable quality (to fishermen) would at once leave him for that occasion at least. Neither may any thoughtless person call out after him, "Bring me a fish too." Failure is sure to be the outcome.

But the most fatal obstacle to successful angling is when an individual engaged in the sport is being mentioned by name on shore. And it usually happens that, if the angler is catching nothing, he attributes his failure to some malicious person on land. To turn his luck he uses the following charm. He ties a knot

<sup>1</sup> The cuttle-fish is valued by the Fijians as the best fish-bait to be had.

in a short piece of cord, and, while drawing it tight, mutters with savage energy, "*A ndómo i Jóni onggó*" (this is the throat of Jóni). The fisherman then expectorates on the knot and casts the string into the sea. This charm is supposed to check Jóni's tongue. Truly if Jóni were garotted as fiercely as the knot is tied, then would Jóni undoubtedly die the death.

Spearing fish is the clever acquirement of the men. From boyhood the Fijian is trained to this difficult sport. It is no unusual occurrence to see a lad walking along the beach with his spear of reed and parachute wire, ready-poised to transfix the unwary "*nggidwa*" (a fish). In the early days of youth he learns to allow for the refraction of the water as he strikes at the tiny fish darting by. Old fishermen say that they always aim a little nearer than the fish appears to be, in order to hit the mark. The distance from the object is only learned by long practice. Yet, with all this practice, it is still a puzzle to us how the Fijian becomes so adept in piercing the slippery bodies of his scaly prey from different angles and at various depths. Naturally such large fish as the "*Ngglo*" (shark), "*Sánga*," and the "*Óngo*" (kingfish), fall easy victims to the native spearmen. The giant octopus he finds lying on the top of the reef. Many Fijians esteem this gruesome creature as good food.

On the ocean side of the great reef, the Fijian seeks the large lobster, and he captures it by diving through the green roller as it breaks upon the coral, and, in the



brief respite which follows, he drags the fish cleverly from its hole in the reef.

Both men and women make a practice of diving for edible shell-fish on the coral patches. When they do so, sometimes the ripple of the water makes it difficult for them to locate anything in the depths below. To obviate this difficulty, the divers have a very ingenious device of literally pouring oil on the troubled waters. Another method is to scatter chewed cocoa-nut on the surface of the wavelets until the exuded oil forms a film. The oil is called "*Ai vākamarāvu ni wai*" (water smoother). Objects below, which before were invisible, become quite plain by its use.

Netting usually falls to the lot of the women. Around this industry, superstitions cling in crowds. Women have always been more superstitious than men, and also more conservative. They, therefore, relinquish more slowly their ancient beliefs. Some of the women's superstitions we shall now consider.

There are two kinds of nets commonly used by the women, one large enough to be handled by two persons, and another small enough for one. The former net is about fourteen feet long, and six or eight feet wide, with an inch and a half mesh. On either end, a pole is affixed by which the net is slung, and which enables the women to handle the net conveniently. Usually, six or eight pairs of women work together, but there may be as many as twenty or thirty pairs. They wade waist-deep in the shallows, each pair holding their

net horizontally between them. As they stand in line no one net should overlap or touch another. And so, holding the nets somewhat below the surface of the water, the women gradually sweep the sea, enclosing in the operation a circular piece of water, and, of course, the fish which happen to be swimming there. The fish caught in this way are those the habit of which is to swim near the surface, and which, to escape, must pass over the outspread nets. But the women are too quick for them, and as soon as they appear darting above the meshes, the net is swiftly raised and the haul tumbles and splashes into the centre as it sags down. The sides of the net are quickly closed above the leaping fish to prevent a possible escape. The rest is easy; for the women take them out one by one, and bite their heads to kill them. Sometimes this operation is done so carelessly that, in the process, the fish slips down the woman's throat. A few years ago a case of the sort was operated on successfully by Dr. de Boissière at Násowálè, Kandávu.

The nets are very carefully looked after by the women, and it is taboo for any person, other than the owner, to touch the pole whilst fishing is proceeding. An exchange of nets is at all times taboo. Every precaution is taken to make the expedition a success. No one must know that a fishing excursion is planned except those engaged in it. In olden days the women blackened their faces to a certain extent—"nggísa" as it is called. They must not eat the flesh of the pig prior to the expedition. If, after everybody has

agreed to go, one of the number should not desire to join with her companions, the whole fishing jaunt is off. When they start they should on no account be recalled. If two lag behind, they are pelted in order to bring them up with the others. Leaves of various trees and vines, as, for instance, the "*Sínu*" (*Leucosmia Burnettiana*), the "*Sóni*" (*Guilandina Bonduc*), the "*Ména vîndi na yaléwa kalóu*" (*Heritiera littoralis* ?), and the "*Távotávo*," are mixed together in some localities, as in Kandávu and Tailévu, and are thrown into the centre of the net as a mascot. The first fish taken is flung back into the same place from which it was caught, in order to complete the charm. Sometimes, with all these precautions, a fish is too quick for the netters, and, when the net is raised, the prey has unaccountably disappeared. In such a case the women attribute their want of success to the fact that the fish had a spirit. They thereupon kick backwards with their feet in the water as a counter-charm to exorcise the uncanny presence. The same thing is done when they suppose that people are thinking about them on shore.

Should a woman die and leave a net, the property is looked upon in Kandávu with superstitious awe. Before they can eat with impunity the fish caught in it, they have the curious custom of throwing into the sea the first one taken.

There is an almost universal custom observed throughout the Group when women are engaged in the occupation which we are discussing. It is called

the "*Vákatundrékeniwái*" or "*Sílimáki*." It has to do with the place where the fishing is to begin. After it has been decided where the women are to net on the coming day, if it should leak out as to where that place is, it is taboo for any person outside the select circle to appear on the scene.

Women who use the smaller net mentioned above do not, when going out in the morning, partake of any fish, nor do they drink fresh water, or chew sugar-cane. If they have thoughtlessly transgressed any of the above rules, they must go forthwith to the beach, where they touch their cheeks with sand. Thus are the evil effects of the broken taboo supposed to be neutralised.

The "*Káwa*" (a fish-trap, called "*Súsu*" in Mbau) is recognised in Kandávu as the property of the women. The *káwa* is made from a round strong vine called, in Kandávu, the "*Rúsa*." The *súsu* of Mbau is manufactured from the downward shoots of the mangrove, which are split with a knife so that they can be more easily manipulated. The *káwa* differs a little from the *súsu* in shape, being spheroid, with the entrance on top, while the latter is the shape of a barrel with an entrance at either end. The principle is the same in each. The entrance of the *káwa* leads straight downward from the top, and the pieces of vine which compose the passage point inwards, so that it is easy for a fish to swim in but difficult for it to get out. The bait for the *káwa* is "*Vúndi*" (a plantain), charcoal, "*Stivistvi*" (a bivalve), "*Basánga*" (a sucking fish),

“*Valiki*,” “*Vúla*” (*bêche de mer*), or “*Sámu*.” As in the case of hand-line fishing, these baits must not be stepped over by any stranger ; moreover, if a woman is going out to the *káwa* and sees any one of them lying in her way she is bound to walk round and not over it.

In connection with the fish-trap, the rules used to be very stringent. In the early morning the owner might not expectorate nor eat before she went to the trap. At no time should she partake of prawns, crabs, or anything that turns red when boiled. Were she to overlook this latter rule the inside of the *káwa* would appear red, and terrify the fish so that they would not venture near it. Another regulation with much more sense in it demands that, when many traps are lying together in the sea, all the owners must go out at the same time lest the finny tribes be disturbed. Evidently, in days gone by, individuals were not above purloining the contents of their neighbour's *káwa*.

To ballast a *káwa*, so that it will not drift in the currents and waves, is no easy task, but the work is achieved by surrounding it with stones. It is an amusing sight when a woman is putting the ballast around a trap in water four or five feet deep. One moment the shock head of hair over a good-humoured face is visible ; the next instant the head disappears and up come the feet all a-wagglng as the woman endeavours to reach down to where the trap is lying.

Mammoth hauls of fish are made chiefly in three ways. The first is the fence, made of reeds intertwined with "*Mindri*," a curious vine which is tougher in the water than out of it. The fence is made in sections and is then attached to poles fixed firmly in the sand on the tidal flats. It is either J or U-shaped, and is generally placed with the bend towards the sea. When the tide flows, the fence may have from six to twelve feet of water in it, and it is practically bare when the tide ebbs. The fish enter the enclosed space with the water, and, in the endeavour to go out with the tide, are caught in rough traps made in the bend of the fence. Such an enclosure may have within it from half an acre to an acre of space.

One superstition may be noticed in regard to the fish-fence. No married woman is supposed to enter it. It is possible to catch thousands of fish in a good fence before it is destroyed by the waves and tide, but none will enter it after a married woman, and especially after one who is enceinte.

A simpler method of making a good haul is to watch the small creeks. Occasionally shoals, such as grey mullet, find their way into a natural trap of this sort. Then real fun begins. The women from the neighbouring villages come with their nets; they block up the entrance of the stream, and, with much screaming and shouting, they will capture as many as two thousand fish in a few hours.

Of all huge catches, the most interesting is made

by means of a long rope of vines and leaves.<sup>1</sup> Such a rope may be over three hundred yards long, and needs at least eighty or a hundred men to handle it. With the rope, a large space of circular shape is enclosed at high tide. The men, half-swimming and half-wading, draw the ends until they overlap, and continue to do so until a close spiral is formed, which gradually grows smaller and smaller. At last the area within the rope is not more than twelve yards in diameter. Meanwhile the surplus rope has been piled up around the space to a height of about four feet, in order to prevent the escape of the fish. Within this small yard the denizens of the deep await capture. All manner of fish from every conceivable nook are shoaled together, and may number from a hundred to a thousand.

One other device, to which the Fijian has recourse, is the "*Sára*." It is a small house made of mangrove, and is shaped like a diminutive Hottentot hut. The house is built upon the sand-flats. When it is well-washed by the sea-water, fish of various kinds make their home in it, much as they seek the holes of the coral reef. After a sufficient time has elapsed, a fence is placed around the little domicile, and the house itself is destroyed by those who built it, and the fish may then be taken within the yard by means of a net or spear. A hundred fish are sometimes caught in this simple manner.

The turtle, or *vónu*, is the king of the sea in the

<sup>1</sup> Used also in Samoa. Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 336.

estimation of the natives. In Kandávu it is called "*Íka mbula*" (living fish), or "*Íka tamáta*." The meaning of the latter name is obscure. "*Íka*" is the equivalent for "fish," and "*tamáta*" has various meanings, amongst them being "a creature that breathes," and "human being." The name might have been given to the turtle on account of the similarity of its breathing to that of a man. Most of us who have gone out to sea at night in Fiji have been startled at the resemblance of the puffing of a turtle as it rises near the boat, to the panting of a man after exertion. Or the name may have its origin in the well-known tenacity with which the creature holds to life. Or again, the amphibious habits of the turtle, or the fact that the reptile bleeds like an animal when killed, may have something to do with it. Turtles grow to an immense size, being measured or weighed by the hundredweight. There are two common kinds, one of which, the "*Táku*" (*Caretta imbricata*), may bring £5, because of the value of its shell.

There are four principal ways of catching turtle. First, with the net. The following is a description of turtle-netting prepared by a Fijian chief (N. Tóngani-válu) for the Fijian Society.

"The *Túnindú* (chief fishermen) are in command of the turtle fishing. Each tribe has its own *Túnindú* and they are called gods of the turtle. After the *yanggóna* has been drunk, they all return to their tribes and there decide upon a day on which to embark the net. Before going fishing, they have a feast which





TURTLE FISHERS.



ROCK FISH FENCE.



has only puddings for its concomitant or relish, as an offering for the turtle fishing, and, after the feast, they meet again in tribes to draw lots; and only when everybody has assembled are the lots drawn, because, if a single person is absent, the turtles will escape and will not be caught in their nets. When all are assembled, the net and a turtle club are brought to the place, and the *Túnindáu* then brings ripe nuts to act as lots, the number of which must be equivalent to the number of their gods. It is the duty of the *Túnindáu* to draw lots, and he takes a nut and mentions a god and then spins it as a lot. In the event of it pointing directly towards the net, '*Mána e ndina*'<sup>1</sup> is called out. The lot for another god is then taken and spun until all the gods have their lots spun for them.<sup>2</sup> If several nuts, the representative of a god, point towards the net, they can expect to catch some turtle.

"After this has been done, the food offering is brought and eaten. They then prepare the provisions for the canoe, the women making the bread; the chief woman of the tribe's duty is to make the bread for the *Túnindáu*, which is to be made in large loaves and then stowed in a basket to be hung on the end of the framè of the deckhouse to be always near to where the *Túnindáu* stands aft. This basket is called '*Káto támbu*' (sacred basket) and nobody must touch it without leave; and should an unprivileged person

<sup>1</sup> "The virtue is true, or manifest."

<sup>2</sup> The spinning nut as a means of divination was used in Tonga. Mariner, "Tonga Islands," vol. ii (1827), p. 191.

so touch it, the fishermen will not succeed in catching a turtle until the net has been brought to land again.

“ When the *Túnindáu* has embarked on the canoe to go fishing he must remain at the end where the basket is hanging. No member of the crew is allowed to eat his food at random, their eating is under the control of the *Túnindáu*. When the reef, where the fishing is to take place, is reached and the tide is on the rise, lots are again cast in the same way as was done on shore to find out the wishes of the gods ; when this has been done, they weigh anchor and go fishing. One of the largest poling-sticks is picked for the *Túnindáu*, who holds it at the stern. The members of the crew can help each other in the poling, but no one may help the *Túnindáu* ; even if they are poling from high to low tide they cannot help him. When the first turtle has been caught in their net, the *Túnindáu* is decorated by putting on the ‘ *mási* ’ and a skirt dress, and being anointed with oil, he then dives in for the turtle in their net. When the turtle is put on board the *Túnindáu* takes three or four large pieces of bread out of the basket and after having broken them up he shares them with the crews. Having eaten, the sail is hoisted and they proceed to the land in order to take their first turtle to the town. When the town is reached and night has fallen the *Túnindáu* is painted red and goes and sleeps alongside the turtle in the open till the morning. When it is heard or reported at the chief town that a turtle has been caught they collect ten or twenty whales’ teeth, which are taken

and presented to the fishermen. This is called '*Nai dhókaváki ni mbi*' (reward for filling the turtle fence). After this ceremony has taken place the *Túnindáu* goes and bathes himself; in the meantime *yanggóna* is being chewed that he may drink immediately after he has finished bathing." <sup>1</sup>

The foregoing is a very detailed account of what used to be done in the old barbaric days. Only a semblance of these elaborate preparations takes place to-day. In the account given, the translator has preserved very well the naïve manner of the original.

The turtle is also captured by spearing. Some say that spearing turtle is a modern mode and was not known by the early Fijian.

In order to attract the animal to a convenient place the natives cut away the linear leaves of the "*Vutia*," a sea-weed growing profusely on the sand-flats, and which is the natural food of the turtle. The outgoing tide carries it out into the bays, where the men go to spear the *vónu*. The spear is heavy, having a barbed iron point, and a rope attached to draw it back. The turtle must not be much more than twenty feet away if the throw is to be successful. The spear may be used at night, when a torch of dried cocoa-nut leaves makes an excellent decoy to attract the animal towards the boat or canoe. It used to be strictly taboo to point at a turtle with the index finger. To do this was the surest way to make the quarry dive. The only safe manner of pointing was

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society, 1912-13.*

to bend the joints of the first finger, or to indicate the turtle with the shut fist. When a *vónu* is captured, the fact is communicated to those on shore by blowing the "*Ndavúí*" (conch shell).

Another way of catching turtle is to wait for them in the breeding season. There are several pretty islands near Kandávu where this is regularly done. Two or more men are told off in the season to remain on these uninhabited islets, and when the *vónu* come on shore to lay their eggs, the scouts very easily outflank the lumbering animals and turn them upon their backs, the perfect symbols of helplessness. Turtles caught in this manner may be kept for months awaiting some approaching festival. Most towns situated near the sea have turtle fences where the captured animals are confined and fed until the day of the feast.

More interesting is the method adopted by the people living at Tálaulía, Kandávu. The ocean at this place is shallow enough for the bottom to be dimly seen, yet not so shallow as to make it possible to frighten the turtle lying upon the ocean floor beneath, if a boat or canoe appears overhead. The natives go out in canoes well supplied with pebbles. The moment they see the shadowy form of a *vónu* in the dim depths below, they quietly drop a stone upon it. This causes it to move just a little, but not so fast or far that the men cannot follow its movements. The action is repeated again and again until the turtle rises like a whale to the top of the water for air. The

opportunity has come for which the fishermen have been waiting, and the instant the turtle rises to the surface, before it has time to look round, a man dives out of the boat, seizes the prey with both hands, and most dexterously turns the animal on its back, splashing helplessly. A noose is thrown and the prize is dragged on board. It is marvellous how enduring the Fijians are in their struggles with some of these big turtles, some of which are over six feet long. I saw two Fijians fighting for half an hour in a rough sea with a turtle which, if weighed, would have been quite two hundredweight.

When the turtle is to be prepared for the oven, one man is appointed to kill it. He does so by severing the blood-vessels at the root of the back flippers and the throat. There is an ancient superstition that if the blood of the dying turtle bespatters any other person than the man who is appointed to slay it, he will become leprous in the parts stained by the blood.

In former times the flesh of the turtle belonged to the chiefs only. But now, much to the chiefs' chagrin, anybody who catches a turtle may eat it.

## CHAPTER XIX

### NET-MAKING

THE practice of netting fish is universal. It is likewise one of the most ancient of industries known to man. The making of nets was familiar to the earliest races, and has changed little in method up to the present time. Even modern machinery, though rapid in its operation, has caused but little difference in the construction of the fishing-net. In Fiji the work of making nets fell largely to the lot of the women, and we may therefore justly infer that the process is practically the same as that in vogue throughout bygone centuries.

The Fijian has shown himself ingenious in adapting himself to his surroundings in this as in other directions. He has sought out from his ample woods a fibre suitable for the manufacture of a sufficiently strong twine, without which nets would be impossible, or at best inefficient. This fibre is the bast or the inside tissue of the bark of a vine called "*Yáka*" (*Pachyrhizus angulatus*). Thus it is in the same category as the fibre of hemp, jute, and flax. The *yáka* creeper is small in circumference, and is covered



with a bark having a furry epidermis. The process of preparing the fibre is as follows :—

The *yáka* is cut into pieces of about nine inches in length, and is boiled for an hour. When the bark is sufficiently softened, it is split by means of the finger-nail, the wood is discarded and the bark laid by in a convenient place. After a sufficient quantity of the latter is collected, the operator takes a “*Kúka*” shell and scrapes the epidermis and the true bark away, leaving the bast or fibre. For the sake of convenience, the tissue is then tied up in bunches and is hung up until needed.

Fijian cord is simply made ; and one is strongly reminded, when watching the process, of the manner in which a saddler makes his sewing-twine out of hemp. Three twisted strands are intertwined by rolling them with the open hand upon the upper part of the leg, until they become a single line. Instead of wax, saliva is the adhesive substance used. The string is regular and often wonderfully neat, parts of it being equal in appearance to the best English fishing-line. It is also very durable in water.

When a sufficient quantity of twine is completed, it is strung upon a needle called the “*Sika ni láwa.*” The needle, which is the wing-bone of the vampire bat, is most suitable for the purpose. Its small knuckles effectually prevent the loops from slipping off, while they are not so large as to prevent the passing of the needle through the meshes. The only other instrument used is a piece of bamboo called “*Yáva*

*ni láwa*," which is the gauge determining the size of the mesh. Upon this gauge, a full row of meshes is knotted, after which the bamboo is withdrawn and the process begins with a fresh row.

The form of nets in Fiji has been governed by the nature of the sea-board, and of the sea-floor adjacent to the shores. There are eight principal kinds of net, which may be described in the following order :—

(a) The "*Láwa ni mbalólo*" is used to catch the "*mbalólo*" when it rises to the surface of the water. The *mbalólo* is a species of annelid which rises up from the coral reefs in the months of October and November. It is much prized by the Fijians as an article of diet. As the worm is very slender a small mesh is necessary to strain it from the water. The *mbalólo* net, therefore, has a mesh scarcely half an inch in length, and the bamboo gauge used in its manufacture is a quarter of an inch wide. The net itself is much like those in which butterflies are caught, having a handle, though the shape and size of the whole thing vary according to the caprice or taste of the individual fisherman.

(b) The "*Sáki*" is a scoop-net having generally the same mesh as the *mbalólo* net, but lacks the handle. It is usually about eighteen inches or two feet in length. This net is manipulated by the women as they scoop up small fish that hide amongst the seaweed which grows profusely on the sand-flats.

(c) A third kind is the "*Taráki*," a net with a mesh slightly bigger than that of the *mbalólo*. The length

of the *tardki* is four feet approximately, while its breadth is about two feet. It is attached to two small sticks, and both sinkers and floats are necessary. A Fijian woman's equipment is not complete without the *tardki*. It is the more convenient, as it requires only one woman to work it. The *tardki* is placed around loose rocks where fish may be in hiding; the stone is then removed, whereupon the fish are caught in the net as they try to escape.

(d) An enlargement of the *tardki* is the "*Mambúke*" (called in the Mbáuan dialect, *Láwa mbúke*). It has the same mesh and shape as the *tardki*, but is eight feet long by six feet broad. It is used to skim the top of the water where small fish swim in shoals. The *mambúke* has the reputation of catching everything eatable on the surface of the sea.

(e) Another and better type of net is the "*Láwa Dhéle*" (Mbáuan, *Láwa Dhéré*), perhaps more serviceable than any other Fijian net. The mesh is one and a half inches long, and it is made of strong cord. The method of its use has already been described in the previous chapter. Its length varies from fourteen feet to eighteen feet, and its breadth may be six or eight feet. A net such as this is light and strong, covers a good expanse of water, and, in the hands of two women, is easily manipulated by means of the poles attached to the ends.

(f) The "*Sauléle*," a narrower net about a yard in width and from four to six yards long, has the same mesh as the preceding. It is valuable when used in

numbers to encircle a small patch of coral or rock. The women penetrate the holes of the reef with sticks, or disturb the water by bombarding it with stones in order to frighten the fish that might have taken refuge there. The fish swim into the nets already laid, and are easily taken by skilled fisherwomen.

The four nets last named all have floats and sinkers. Light woods make excellent substitutes for cork, and have the general name of "*Útoutu*." Dr. Seemann mentions as floats the square fruits of the "*Vutu rákaráka*" (*Barringtonia speciosa*, Linn.).<sup>1</sup> Shells are invariably attached for sinkers. The necessary weight is attained by increasing or reducing the number of shells. To prevent these four nets from collapsing, sticks are joined to the ends in each case.

(g) I have seen in use at Mbau an immense seine net, called the "*Láwa Sukáu*," so heavy that scores of men were needed to manage it. In the centre part there is a portion,<sup>2</sup> the meshes of which are composed of sinnet, and which bellies out like a great bag as the net is drawn through the water. Gradually the fish are driven into this receptacle, sometimes in thousands. The grunting noises of the captured fish can be heard quite distinctly above the surface of the water. At the last moment, the Fijians rush into the water and force the catch into the sinnet bag.

(h) There remains to be described the turtle-net

<sup>1</sup> "Viti" (1862), p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> The other portion is made from the fibres of the Vau (*Paritium tiliaceum*, Juss.).

with which the men of the tribe captured the chiefly dainty. Perhaps no better description could be given than that prepared for the Fijian Society by Ndéve Tónganiválu.<sup>1</sup> He gives not only the mode of manufacture but also adds certain ancient customs which have largely ceased to exist :—

“Turtle nets are usually made from sinnet. If a tribe of fishermen intend to make a turtle net they discuss it ‘*en famille*,’ and a day on which to commence the work is decided upon. The cocoa-nut trees are climbed and the green nuts collected. The fibre covering is then stripped off and roasted in a pit-oven ; after two or three days’ roasting, it is dug up to be beaten and the plaiting is then commenced. The sinnet for turtle is entirely different from the sinnet used for house- or boat-building and is plaited very carefully and of large strands so as to be strong. During the work of plaiting the sinnet for a turtle net, the head of the tribe provides *yanggóna* and food. When the sinnet has been finished, a day is decided upon to make the net, and a great feast will be held on that day. Upon the completion of the net, another tribal gathering is held, at which every man, woman, and child must be present. The reason for this gathering is to inform the members of the tribe of the day on which the net is to be put into the water for the first time, so that they will all be able to agree as to the day. The head of the family will then earnestly beseech them all to be friendly with each other and not to

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1912-13.

have tribal quarrels and to ask them to agree to the day fixed upon for the immersion of the new net. Should, however, there be any quarrels, the fishing will not be successful, and it is on account of this that everybody must be present at the meeting. Upon approval of the day being given, the members of the tribe prepare a feast and at its conclusion everybody (men and women alike) go and weed the graves of their ancestors or their relations and, after thoroughly cleaning them, drape them with tapa and wreaths. The reason for this is that the spirits of the dead may be friendly and thus ensure the success of the new net. This custom is still followed by some people, although the religious teachers are continually trying to put a stop to it and asking them to refrain from doing it as it is a heathen custom, which however they do not agree to. They maintain that, should they fail to weed the graves they will not be successful with their fishing: this is still believed and practised, although everybody quite understands that it is a heathen custom.<sup>1</sup> When the weeding of graves is finished, lots are cast and the way for doing this is as follows:—Should a tribe have three or four gods they take the same number of ripe nuts and, after naming each after a god, they are spun. Should the eyes of one of the nuts point directly towards the net all the members of the tribe call out ‘*Mána e ndina.*’ In the event of one or two nuts pointing to the net all the members

<sup>1</sup> There is a slight contradiction here with what he has already said. He means “belonging to heathen times.”

of the tribe proceed to the place, where the feast has been prepared, to eat together. A move is then made and they go fishing, and should one or more turtles be caught they immediately return to land to cook and eat them. This is called the 'feast for the beating out of the sinnet,' or 'the first fruits of the net.' After this the net is taken ashore and dried. It is then carefully wrapped up in plaited cocoa-nut leaves and taken into a house for safe keeping until instructions are received from the chief to go turtle fishing."

With the exception of the *taráki* all the above nets are generally used on the sea-beaches and sand-flats. In the larger rivers the people have a substitute in the shape of a basket-net. This primitive contrivance is an openwork cane-basket about two feet long, eighteen inches deep, and nine inches in breadth. The method adopted is as follows: The men line the banks of the stream and cut away the long grass which is the hiding place of the fish. The latter are thereby driven into the stream, where the women await them. The women hold their baskets with the long mouth downwards and press them quickly to the bottom of the water. In this way many fish are caught as they endeavour to swim between the women. A fisherwoman knows immediately a fish has entered her basket, and she at once seizes the opening of the trap with her hands. The name of the basket is in most places the "*Veiláwa*."

A very interesting substitute for the net was employed

in earlier times. A man who had learned it as a boy in Ra told me of it. A piece of reed was taken and bent into a circle, the ends being firmly tied. Afterwards a short handle was attached. The operator went into the woods and found strong spider-webs<sup>1</sup> in which he waved the bent reed many times until it became quite covered with them. The handle was taken away and the reed-hoop, so enveloped, was laid on the top of the water in a stream, where it floated. The fisherman then put into it small grasshoppers and flies; or he threw little pebbles, or spat within the circle. The fish rose like trout, and in their eagerness to get the bait were caught by the gills and fins in the spider-web.

In the interior of Fiji the natives make an ingenious trap for single fish of a larger size than can be caught with spider-web. Reeds and grass are tied together at one end and a device is fashioned just like the straw coverings of cordial bottles, only that they are somewhat larger. When this trap is laid in the bottom of the stream with the entrance away from the current, it happens that many a fish is captured, for it swims foolishly into the opening, where little obstructions catch against the scales and fins, making it impossible for the prey to retreat.

<sup>1</sup> In the Hebrides garfish are caught with spider-web balls attached to the end of a kite tail. Florence Coombe, "Islands of Enchantment," p. 173. Similarly, in New Britain, the web is employed for the purpose.



## CHAPTER XX

### MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

IN the barbarous days of Fiji communication was established by certain signs or signals, by messengers, and by the wooden drum, or "*Láli*."

Quite a large number of miscellaneous signs and signals have a fixed meaning amongst the Fijians.

When sailing, a chief always had tied to the boom of his canoe a bunch of pandanus leaves. No one else might imitate him in this practice.

At Mbau, the flag of the high chief's sacred canoe was well known. It was called the "*Kuila*." The Fijian chief, Ndéve Tónganiválu, quoted previously on another subject, also enlightens us on this matter. To quote from his article in the *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 9th Dec. 1911 :—

"The '*Kuila*' is not a Fijian word—it is Tongan. At Mbau flags had different designations. The war-standard was called '*ndrotini*'; there were two kinds of canoe flags, one was called '*na íronggèle*.' It was the streamers of the sail which were arranged along the lower yard, commencing from the upper end of the yard and reaching to the foot. The other was the '*tawákè*,' which was a long flag. The '*tawákè*' was

hoisted on the sacred canoe when sailing, and was hoisted to the upper end of the lower yard. But on the canoe of the Róko (high chief) Túi Mbau it was hoisted to the upper end of the upper yard. The '*tawákè*' of the Róko Túi Mbau was a sacred thing; the people might not touch it at random. There is a tribe at Mbau who have the hereditary right to touch the Róko Túi Mbau's '*tawákè*.' When one of that tribe is appointed to handle the Róko Túi Mbau's '*tawákè*,' he is given the name of '*Língatámbu*';<sup>1</sup> He is the sacred hand for the '*tawákè*.' The '*tawákè*' of the Róko Túi Mbau is kept in the house of Língatámbu, and there is a small doorway for itself to be put through to the inside of the house; it might not be entered at another doorway. When the chiefs of Mbau are preparing to sail, Língatámbu goes and takes the '*tawákè*' by its doorway and takes it to the Róko Túi Mbau's canoe. On that day he may not touch his own food because he has touched the Róko Túi Mbau's '*tawákè*'; another person puts his food to his mouth. If several sacred canoes are sailing together, none of them may sail past to windward of the canoe on which is hoisted the '*tawákè*' of the Róko Túi Mbau. If any canoe is going so fast as to pass it, they will sheer off to sail by the leeward side; it is forbidden to sail past to windward. While the sacred canoes are sailing, the ladies practise a song-dance at Mbau called the '*Vákadhóa tawákè*.' And, when they return from sailing, the ladies

<sup>1</sup> "Sacred hand."

dance to welcome the ' *tawákè* ' of the Róko Túi Mbau."

A chiefly *vásu* has the right to fly *mási* (native cloth) from his boom when approaching the town to which he is *vásu*.

A time-honoured sign of grief is still observed in the island of Mbau. The crew of a vessel coming to the island after the death of a high chief are accustomed to tie to the mast-head articles of value such as *tápa* (painted *mási*), *mási* (native cloth), or European cloth. When they draw near to the town they are met by men from Sóso and Lásakáu (sections of Mbau) whereupon the string holding the goods is cut so that they fall into the sea. The men of Sóso and Lásakáu then struggle in the water in high glee for the possession of the gifts. The cutting of the string is called the "*Támbisá*," and the name of the gift is "*Ai lolóku*." <sup>1</sup>

Mbau natives, when carrying bad news by water, indicate to those on shore that something is amiss by throwing stones or oranges into the water thrice. A single stone is sufficient to convey the news at Veráta. In the latter place, as well as in other districts, it is the custom for a canoe, when bringing a dead body, to throw away the sail when approaching the shore. Those on land are immediately cognisant of what has happened.

Fishermen at sea, when they have caught a turtle, inform their friends by blowing on the conch shell for a considerable time.

<sup>1</sup> " The grieving."

Deaths are reported in similar fashion in Lau. Throughout Fiji bereavement is generally emphasised by the wailing of women ; but in Lau wailing is not the usual method of showing grief on the occasion of a death.

There was no way of wearing mourning for deceased friends or relatives except by shaving the back of the head, a custom which is not continued. Of late, the Fijians are following in a marked degree the English custom of dressing in black.

The first joint of the little finger on children's hands used to be severed when a great chief died. There are men alive to-day whose little fingers have been shortened in this way.

Travellers had their signs and signals. If a path branches into two, and a Fijian wished to show a friend who was in the rear which direction he had taken, he would throw leaves on the track which he had not followed.

Sometimes Fijians, when travelling, become thirsty. Should they be near a plantation of cocoa-nuts, the owner of which is their friend, they will climb a tree for the young fruit, and drink without a qualm of conscience the luscious liquid ; but the husks they will gather together and cover with cocoa-nut fronds. The owner will thereby understand that friends in need of a drink have taken his fruit.

Visitors to a town recognise that they are not welcome when a feast is not prepared for them. The Fijians are the most hospitable of folk, and they count

it a shame to neglect a stranger amongst them. The absence of the feast, therefore, would be a most significant indication of the thoughts of the people concerning a traveller.

Virgins (male and female) were known in former days by little plaits of hair hanging from the temple.<sup>1</sup> In these times the young men have given up these curious ornaments, and very few of the girls follow the custom. The plaits may still be seen in out-of-the-way villages. Chiefly maidens were distinguished from the commoners by the greater length of the loose ends of their *māsi* (native cloth) girdles.

Messages were sent in various ways. Inhabitants of neighbouring islands were accustomed to signal to each other by means of fires.

An explicit message was carried verbally by a messenger; nothing was written, as the Fijians had not evolved any system of written signs. Hence the man who could remember exactly the words of his chief, was most highly honoured. But accuracy was not the messenger's only accomplishment. He must know the proper formula with which to begin and conclude a communication. Much depended upon the preparation for the message as well as on the skill with which the message was concluded. Certain forms of words became stereotyped; also there arose a family of couriers in each important clan, whose accomplishments in this direction were handed down

<sup>1</sup> So in Samoa. Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," pp. 316-17.

from father to son. The chief went nowhere without his "*Máta ni vanúa*" (special herald).<sup>1</sup> Some of these *máta ni vanúa* had great influence, and were always the spokesmen of their chiefs in every important ceremony.

Allied to the *máta ni vanúa* was the office of town-crier. Each evening his far-carrying voice would be heard echoing through the hills as he enumerated for the people the work to be done on the morrow. He was fully seized with the importance of his duties, supported as they were by the direct command of the chiefs.

In former times the "*Láli*," or wooden drum, had its uses for sending certain kinds of information.

We are all acquainted with the far-carrying sounds of the woodman's axe, consequent upon the vibrations of the tree on which it is used. Had we no metals with which to make bells, it is highly probable that we should have fallen back on the vibrating tree as a substitute.

The Fijian has thus adapted himself to his surrounding conditions of life, and has made considerable advance in the knowledge of acoustics. He has found out, for instance, that a hollow tree produces in concussion a more penetrating sound than a solid one. A tree standing not far from Richmond, Kandávu, illustrates this well. As the Fijian youth passes the hollow trunk he is almost irresistibly prompted to

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* an illuminating article on the *mátanivanúa*, by A. M. Hocart. *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, 1913, p. 109.

pick up a piece of stick and play a gratuitous tattoo. The native has also discovered that a hollow tree slightly open will emit more sound than a closed one. Nor has it escaped his notice that a tree stripped of its bark is an acoustic improvement on one which has its bark intact. He has likewise marked the fact that some woods are superior to others in resonance.

All these primitive discoveries in acoustics the Fijian has embodied in his *lali*—an instrument half-drum and half-bell. It is made of the strongest and most enduring timber, chief amongst which are the “*Ndilo*” (*Calophyllum Inophyllum*), the “*Tavola*” (*Terminalia Catappa*), and the “*Vesi*” (*Afzelia bijuga*). These woods are extremely tough, and their resonance is remarkable. The shape of the *lali* follows that of the tree from which it is cut, except that the concavity has been accentuated by slightly rounding off the ends. The edges are turned somewhat inwards, which is necessary if the sound-waves are to come primarily from within. Consequently, the vibrations from the sides of the *lali* converge to a point within the drum, and are then projected at great speed through the oblong opening, much on the same principle as a shot from a cannon. A similar idea is seen in a certain kind of bullock-bell in Australia, which has a mouth smaller than the rest of the bell. Though the sound is thereby muffled, yet it is of a quality that is very penetrating and far-carrying.

The sounding property of the Fijian *lali* is remarkable, though it varies according to the size of the

instrument. The ordinary town *lali* is usually about six feet long by three feet high. I have measured one nine feet long, three feet six inches high, and two feet ten inches thick. A man stood inside to beat it. It was responsive to the lightest tap, and when beaten loudly was heard at a distance of ten miles as the crow flies,<sup>1</sup> although mountains intervened. It is quite common to hear the beat of a large *lali* at a distance of seven miles, and from three or four miles over a high range of mountains. When we compare this performance with the resonance of our best metal bells, there is not much to choose between them as far as penetrating power is concerned.

The cutting of a new *lali* is always a great occurrence. When it is being taken on a canoe to its destination, it is beaten all the way, though it may be twenty miles, and the natives along the coast know therefrom that a town somewhere near is receiving a new drum.

Originally, the Fijian *lali* had a purport which it has largely lost. It is now a mere relic used for announcing the time of religious services, and for making New Year's Eve, and like occasions, hideous. But, in early days, the *lali* and its beat were invested with great importance. Old men assure me that it was never beaten without some definite motive or meaning. The beats differed according to their significance, and were easily recognised by those who heard them. It must be taken for granted, however,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. Brown states he heard a Samoan *lali* twenty miles away. "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 422.







BEATING A SMALL LĀLI.

[To face page 100.]

that, in different districts, the beats varied when announcing the same thing ; and then again the same beat in the same district was liable to be altered slightly by the fancy of the operators. Of these latter, some were adepts, and were well known for their gift of embellishing the phrases of the beat with grace-notes and accidentals (Fijian, "*Tatanggtiri nggtiri*").

The first *láli* beat which should be noticed is simple, and is indigenous to Fiji. We might call it the Fijian beat, and it is heard more often in these days than any other. It is played with two short, thick sticks ("*Ai úaúa*") usually upon a single large drum, but may have other drums accompanying it. The beat is regular and heavy, and is the first beat that a Fijian drummer would learn :—

### No. 1.

#### *Ordinary Fijian Láli Beat.*



*Note.*—The quavers may be omitted.

The Fijian beat is often heard in these days calling people to church. We must not confound it with the Tongan beat, which is also universally known in Fiji. The Tongan call is lively, and avoids the solemn, monotonous tone of the Fijian beat.

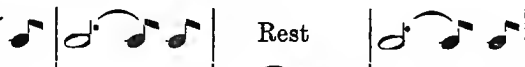

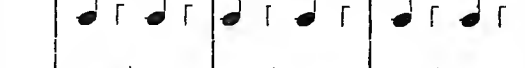

## No. 2.

*Ordinary Tongan Láli Beat.*

The “*Láli ni tambúa*” is apparently a combination of the previous two, and was played within a town where a *tambúa* had just been received in a time of distress or war. The *tambúa*, as we know, was requisitioned to confirm a town’s allegiance to the centre whence the *tambúa* came, or to alienate and undermine its loyalty to another town. The reception of such a *tambúa* was usually signalled by the *Láli ni tambúa*. It is the ordinary Fijian *láli* beat with an accompaniment on another drum somewhat like the imported Tongan call. In this combination the beat of the first *láli* is called “*Kámha mbú.*”

## No. 3.

*Láli ni Tambúa.*

First Láli	{	Right hand		{	<i>ad libitum</i>
(Kámha mbú)		Left hand			
Second Láli	{	Right hand		{	<i>ad libitum</i>
(accompaniment)		Left hand			

An adaptation of the *Láli ni tambúa* was the "*Láli ni Wángga*" and was played upon a high chief's canoe when approaching a village.

There is no toll for the dead amongst Fijian calls. What we hear at the present time is an imitation of our own funeral toll, and answers the purpose very well. When heard amidst the hills of Fiji, it has a peculiarly solemnising effect.

#### No. 4.

#### *Funeral Call.*

Very slowly.

Right hand		Repeat at intervals
Left hand		

But, in some parts of Fiji, as at Yálè, Kandávu, there used to be what was named the "*Vákatáratára*" (raising the taboo). On the fourth night after the death of a chief, it was the duty of the relatives to intimate to the townspeople that ordinary work (which had been suspended on account of the funeral) might proceed as before. The beat employed had a preliminary attack of four or eight heavy strokes, according to the number of nights which had elapsed since the death. The heavy notes were immediately followed by a "rat-tat," diminishing in volume of sound, but increasing in acceleration.

## No. 5.

*The "Vákatáratára."*

Right hand {  Rat-tat.


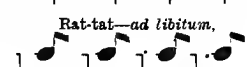
Left hand { 

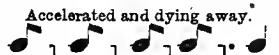
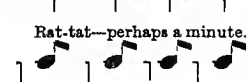
Alternately, *accelerando e diminuendo*, until the beat dies away.  
Repeat *ad libitum*.

Yet another beat is called the "*Láli ni Kámbakóro*" (besieging a village) and is a pretty one, although ominous in former days.<sup>1</sup> It began with a rat-tat (*accelerando e diminuendo*) followed by heavy beats as given in No. 6. This call was used when a town was invested in times of war, and was repeated, like all these beats, *ad libitum*.

## No. 6.

*Láli ni Kámbakóro.*

First *Láli* { Right hand {  Rat-tat—*ad libitum*,  
Left hand { 

Second *Láli* { Right hand {  Accelerated and dying away.  
Left hand {  Rat-tat—perhaps a minute.

Repeated *ad libitum*.

If a chief had been slain in battle, or in a siege such as that mentioned above, another *láli* beat was evolved

<sup>1</sup> In San Cristoval the message of war was conveyed by means of a wooden drum. Florence Coombe, "Islands of Enchantment," p. 224.

to mark the fact. This beat varied in different places. Two examples are given. They were primarily meant to intimidate the foe and to express the triumph of the victors. But they had also the further significance of the wild revel before placing the dead body in the oven. The two specimens of the "*Láli ni Mbakóla*" (as they were generally called) which are appended, have the specific names of the "*Nderúa*" and the "*Tímbi*" respectively. The former is from Ngau and Lau, and the latter was that in vogue amongst the Wáimaróu clan, Tailévu.

The *Nderúa* from Lau and Ngau is simple. The sticks strike alternately thrice, and are then brought down heavily together. After a pause it is repeated, and so on.

### No. 7.

#### *The "Nderúa."*

Right hand		Repeat <i>ad libitum</i> . A slow, heavy beat.
Left hand		

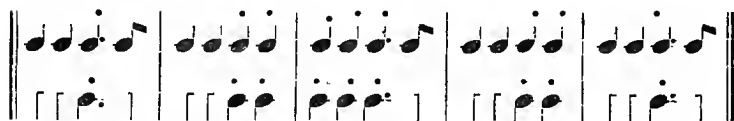
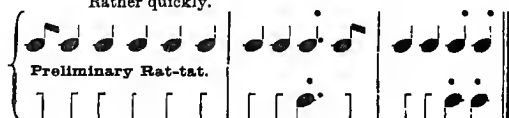
The *Tímbi* is the most complex *láli*-beat of all, and is a very fine one when executed skilfully. It must have been truly dreadful when heard amid its fearful associations. To be beaten properly there must be one sharp-toned *láli* to lead, and four or five large booming drums to accompany it. At first I could not distinguish any time in the rhythm, but after the Wáimaróu native had beaten it repeatedly, I found that

its rhythm was in ordinary common measure, which was kept admirably throughout. Anybody with a small knowledge of music could play and appreciate the beat, if he remember that the lower line represents the ominous roll of the big *láli*, while the top line is the spiteful little *láli* that leads the savagely triumphant orchestra.

## No. 8.

*The "Tímbi."*

Rather quickly.

Small Láli,  
both sticks together.Large Lális,  
both sticks together.After a pause—  
Repeat *ad libitum*.

Now suppose the fight to be over; the victors were often prompted to build a "*Mbúré*" spirit-house) to their ancestors, or to their particular god. The building of such a house or *mbúré* was a great



event, and was accompanied by much ceremony. A special drum-beat was employed when the house was nearing completion, that is, when the ridge was being covered with the vine called the "*Wákalóu*" (*Lygo-dictyon Forsteri*, J. Smith). Not everyone might have the honour of thatching the ridge-pole; only those who had distinguished themselves in battle were allowed to attempt such a chiefly task. The men who had slain their score or their ten warriors in battle, and were called therefore "*Korói*," or "*Mbáti*," or "*Nggángga*," were chosen to crown the edifice with *wákalóu*. With all due ceremony and dignity the brave seated himself on top of the house. Then the *wákalóu* was handed to him, in order that he might intertwine it about the ridge-pole. During the operation, those below executed the first part of what is known as the "*Láli ni mbúré*." It is unique in this respect that, in addition to the kettle-drum rat-tat described in a previous beat, there is an accompaniment of voices calling loudly the following words in Fijian: "Dho-o-o-ka dhóka dhóka dhóka dhók', Dho-o-o-ka dhóka dhóka dhóka dhók'."

### No. 9.

#### *Láli ni Mbúré. First Part.*

Voices—high pitched—Dho-o-o-ka dhóka dhóka dhóka dhók'—in descending scale.

Right hand		Repeated thrice, while passing up the " <i>Wákalóu</i> ."
Left hand		

The cry begins on a high falsetto note, and descends in the scale, increasing in acceleration as it does so. When repeated three times, the *Korói* is supposed to have sufficient vine to go on with. He immediately begins to weave and thread it about the ridge-pole, to the accompaniment of the second part of the *Láli ni mbúrè*, as follows :—

No. 10.

*Láli ni Mbúrè. Second Part.*

Right hand		Repeated thrice whilst thatching proceeds.
Left hand		

The whole process was repeated until the house was finished. Then the usual *mangiti* (feast) was presented to those who had worked on the erection, and the brave who had completed the work mingled with his fellow clansmen.

A house such as the foregoing was frequently erected before a war to ensure success, a space of ten days elapsing before the tribesmen began the battle.

When war has ceased, the "*Láli ni sautú*," or *Láli* of peace, is beaten. It has no appreciable difference from the *Vákatáratára* (No. 5) and has a like meaning. The warriors hearing it knew that once more had the "Angel of Peace" smiled on the land, and that they might turn again to their usual occupations until the war-*láli* should be heard booming anew its message of fear, rapine, and death.

## CHAPTER XXI

### FOODS AND FOOD-PROHIBITIONS

Food plays a most important part in the social life of the Fijian. The islander is not a glutton, though sometimes he goes to the bounds of excess in his feasts. On the contrary, the constitution of the Fijian, especially of the woman, has been impaired because, in some provinces, food is rarely eaten more than twice a day. The majority of the natives have no set time for their meals ; they are not governed by the regularity which distinguishes more highly civilised societies. The ordinary people live very much from hand to mouth ; each day brings its work of searching for foods to vary the inevitable yam or taro diet.

The land is prolific in many kinds of sustenance, and the natives have lived long enough in it to know just where to go for what they need. There is little time or labour wasted in the search for food.

To the question, How does food play an important part in the life of the native ? the answer is, that the many feasts which he prepares on all definite occasions are inextricably interwoven with his etiquette and social organisations. To take away the feast from the

Fijian would be to leave him a life dull and monotonous. The most important times for holding feasts are, the birth of a child, the first turning of the child, the cleansing of the mother, the death of a chief, the celebrations at the end of ten nights and a hundred nights after a notable death, a marriage, a conference of chiefs either in a town or province, a religious gathering of any kind, the installation of the head of a district, the completion of any great work, and the visit of a distinguished person. There are numerous other occasions on which the Fijian indulges in feasting, and it might truly be said that he lives from feast to feast. Unfortunately, at times, the preparation for them becomes a burden on the people, especially when the spirit of emulation enters into them. During such a season of rejoicing, lasting only a week, hundreds of pounds have been wasted in riotous living, leaving the clansmen a load of debt which takes months to remove. The local Chinese storekeeper, who has an eye to business always, has often, to my knowledge, established a lien on the following year's crop, by advancing provisions to the enthusiastic customers who crowd his small shop.

It is at feast-time that the Fijian earns for himself the reputation of being a good eater, and it is then that he certainly goes beyond the bounds of moderation. I have seen a Fijian eat continuously for over an hour at one of these convivial gatherings.

A feast without its "*Kénai dhói*" (relish) is no feast at all. It boots little to have a mountain of

yams or *táro*, if there be no flesh or fish-food to go with it. The most highly prized relish is pork. A handsome *mangiti* would have at least one "*Rara*" (ten pigs), but really large feasts would be distinguished by the presentation to the chief of three or four *rara* and even more. In modern days cattle are being requisitioned more frequently in lieu of the porkers. At many feasts there appear together cattle, pigs, poultry, and fish. The former (cattle and pigs) are presented whole, and are divided afterwards. The latter (fish) are usually cooked in a ground-oven if a quantity has been prepared ; the precaution is always taken of wrapping them up carefully in leaves to prevent earth or ashes getting to them. When cooked they are placed in large baskets for presentation. Shrimps were often boiled in hollow pieces of bamboo, and so carried.

After a feast has been prepared, it is customary to proffer it to the highest personage in the town. It is divided out into portions for the various divisions of the company assembled. It is almost pathetic to note the seriousness with which this is done. A Fijian is never more thoughtful or just than when he divides the *mangiti*. He begins at the highest individual, and does not cease until everybody has been supplied according to his rank and station. Visitors to the town are invariably remembered, and studiously cared for. When the food has thus been distributed in little heaps over the open square of the town, the head of the feast is notified, who at once gives thanks. A

crier then calls out the names of the recipients, and these come forward without further ceremony to carry their portion to their houses.

If a visitor has been fêted, he is supposed, according to Fijian etiquette, to take away with him the remains of his food. On my first visit to a certain town in Kandávu, I was presented with twenty-two fowls for my Sunday dinner. Those I could not eat, my boys carried away. Though I pressed the villagers to receive their share, they refused, as it was my first visit to the village. The visitor is often thus considerably hampered, and good food has not seldom been thrown away when the outskirts of the settlement have been reached.

Fiji is prodigal in the number of kinds of food it affords its inhabitants. So fruitful is the country that a famine of three months is almost unheard of, and would be remembered for years. The menu of dishes does not vary greatly throughout the Archipelago. Slight divergences occur where the exigencies of the case demand. The Kandávians, for instance, raise *yams* (*Dioscorea alata*, Linn.), *táro* (*Colocasia antiquorum*, Linn.), *kawái* (*Dioscorea aculeata*, Linn.), *kumála* (sweet potato, *Batatas edulis*, Chois.), and *kaile* (*Helmia bulbifera*) in abundance. Several kinds of manioc are grown with success. If a quantity of these roots and tubers is required for a feast, they are baked in ground-ovens. The procedure is to dig a hole to the requisite size. The excavation is then lined with stones of a regular form, upon which a fire is

lit. When the wood has burnt out, the stones are nearly red hot. The coals and ashes are removed and a lining of leaves is neatly laid over the sides and bottom of the pit. Upon the leaves, the food is placed. More leaves cover the opening, and earth is heaped up into the shape of a mound, in order to keep the heat in. A couple of hours of this crude treatment suffices to cook most foods.

The tubers named above comprise the staple of the Fijian's food-supply from end to end of Fiji. When these are scarce, the shortage is supplied by fruit- and nut-trees of many kinds. The most serviceable is the bread-fruit tree (*Artocarpus incisa*, etc., Linn.) of which there are several varieties. As a food it cannot maintain its reputation. It is pleasant to eat, however, when baked on the coals or boiled, and is a favourite article of diet with the natives. One great advantage the bread-fruit has, viz., that it ripens just when the supply of tubers begins to give out. The cocoa-nut tree is so much a necessity to the native that it might be termed the milch-cow of Fiji.

Other fruit trees are the "*Ndawa*" (*Nephelium pinnatum*, Camb.), the "*Wi*" (*Evia dulcis*, Comm.), the "*Oléti*" (*Carica Papaya*, Linn.), the "*Kavika*" (*Eugenia Malaccensis*), the orange, and the mango, the last two having been introduced into the Group.

Nut trees are very abundant, the chief being the "*Ívi*" (*Inocarpus edulis*, Forst.), the "*Tavóla*" (*Terminalia Catappa*, Linn.), and the "*Náwawáwa*"

(*Cordia subcordata*, Lam.). The nut of the *ivi* (Tahitian chestnut) is either boiled or roasted. A kind of Fijian bread is made from it, and is much appreciated by some. The method is to grate the nut and tie it up in large leaves for about a week, until it ferments. The natives then press it into little lumps about the size of a hen's egg, and wrap it up closely again for use when required. The taste is strong and acrid.

The term "*Ai dhói*" has already been applied to the flesh relish of feasts, such as cattle and pigs, but it has a very wide connotation. In Kandávu, for instance, it further comprises all the following: bats, flying-foxes, plover, pigeons, parrots, ducks, goats, dogs, cats, wild pigs, shrimps, shell-fish of all kinds, snakes, eels, turtle. All these the Kandávuan can eat as a relish.

But the term "*Ai dhói*" has a still wider significance, for it may be used to describe all those leaves which, when boiled, are used by the native as a piquant addition to his food. Dr. Seemann supplies a good list of them for those who can peruse his book.<sup>1</sup> The leaves most generally treated in this way are the "*Mbóro*" (*Solanum anthropophagorum*, Seem.), the taro, watercress, "*Mbéle*" (*Abelmoschus moschatus*, Moench.), the "*Mbóro loa*," the "*Óta*" (*Angiopteris evecta*, Hoffm.), and the sweet potato. All the foregoing, after being boiled, are simply flavoured with salt, or with the expressed juice of the cocoa-nut.

<sup>1</sup> "Viti," pp. 308-9.



To the list of "*Kénai dhói*" the native of Lau adds eggs of sea-gulls which the people in that part of the Group find in the sands, *míndri* leaves, a reed fungus on trees called "*Karóu*," "*Ndrósi*" which is a species of jelly-fish, "*Mboréti*" (*Acrostichum aureum*, Linn.), a kind of fern. The *ndrósi* is usually kept four nights and then roasted on the coals; or it may be simply boiled.

In respect of "*Kénai dhói*" there is one remarkable variation in Fiji, viz., in the case of the people of the interior of Viti Lévu. From time immemorial they have been accustomed to look upon almost everything living as their lawful food; and there is a marked difference between them and the coastal natives in this particular aspect of the subject. The stomach of the coastal native will heave at some things, such as the obnoxious rat. But the only living things which, apparently, come amiss to the inhabitants of the interior, are centipedes, flies, spiders, and mosquitoes. They include in their bill of fare owls, hawks, frogs, rats, lizards, locusts (sometimes eaten raw), wood-grubs (a delicacy), slugs, caterpillars, and the young of the red ant found in ant-hills. The latter article of diet they boil together and eat with gusto. Bats are boiled in their skins, and there is nothing left but the bones when the native has finished his repast, even the wings being eaten. The gap is so wide between the lists of food which the coastal and interior natives respectively use that I would suggest as a cause a racial difference.

Puddings are much prized by the Fijian, and he has many kinds to his credit, upwards, perhaps, of a couple of score. They are called puddings (*vákalólo*) because they are sweet, and are eaten with sauce after the ordinary food has been disposed of.

The following kinds are known all over Fiji.

### *Ndálóyádha.*

Scrape the *táro* root and tie it up in leaves. Boil or bake. When cooked, cut into pieces as big as a small hen's egg, and pour on the juice or *lólo*. The *lólo* is the expressed juice of grated cocoa-nut, boiled with sugar and water until the mixture turns brown. If no sugar is available the juice of the sugar-cane takes its place.

### *Siváromádha.*

*Táro* is boiled whole, and then pounded into a jelly. This is cut up into pieces like the *Ndálóyádha*, and the *lólo* is sprinkled on it. In this case the *lólo* is not liquid. It is made thus :—Grate cocoa-nut, then boil with sugar and water, until the water has all disappeared. The *lólo* then becomes crumbly and dark brown.

### *Sivárovúla.*

Treat the *táro* as in the case of *Siváromádha*. To make the *lólo*, grate a cocoa-nut or two, express the juice, but keep the grated portion. Then take the *táro*, cooked as in the *Siváromádha*, and cut it into pieces. Rub these pieces in the dry grated cocoa-nut.

When the pudding is to be served, the juice prepared as above is poured on, and the pudding is brought in to the guests.

*Ndardí.*

*Ndardí* is the same as the preceding, except that the dry grated cocoa-nut is not used.

*Yákiyáki.*<sup>1</sup>

This is a pudding made from bread-fruit, which is first baked on the coals ; the inside of the fruit is taken out and pommelled with a cocoa-nut or young bread-fruit until it becomes a pulp. After being cut into pieces, a dressing is poured over comprised of cocoa-nut juice, sugar and salt to taste.

*Túkivátu.*

In this pudding the *lóló* or juice is the same as that of the *Yákiyáki*. But the roast bread-fruit is taken and beaten quickly under water with a stone. The outside covering falls away, and the inside is beaten to a pulp with a stick. *Lóló* is poured over as in the *Yákiyáki*. What difference the beating under water makes, it is hard to say, but the Fijians state that they can distinguish the taste of the *Túkivátu* from the *Yákiyáki*.

*Sákosáko.*

*Táro* is taken and baked on the coals and then put in fresh water, and the skin is peeled off. It is then beaten with a stick and the *lóló* added.

<sup>1</sup> Called in Samoa "*taofolo*," and much prized. Dr. G. Brown, "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 133.

*Vákalólo yambía.*

The root of the manioc is scraped and soaked in water. The fibres are then strained out with the aid of long cocoa-nut fibres, leaving the starchy portion to dry. This is cooked by boiling it with water, and is eaten with the cocoa-nut sauce. Or if a great quantity be required, it may be done in the following manner:—A wooden trough four feet long is filled with tapioca diluted with water. Near by the Fijians light a fire in which stones are set. When the stones are heated thoroughly two or three are thrown into the tapioca, while two men, standing at either end of the trough, push them backwards and forwards in the mixture until the food is cooked. To watch the work is to lose one's appetite for the dish.

*Vákasóso.*

This pudding is made from plantains. First the Fijians press the juice out of grated cocoa-nut. Then they make a slit in the plantain and fill it with the dry gratings. The juice is poured over all. The flavour is very pleasant, and is palatable to a European. No sugar nor salt is used in *Vákasóso*. Some cook the pudding after they have prepared it as above.

*Waidu.*

Cut bananas up into small pieces, then tie up in banana leaves with the juice of the cocoa-nut as dressing, and bake. The people of the Lau Group of

islands have some special puddings of their own improvisation. I give two of them.

*Málimáli.*

Tapioca and ripe plantains are mixed together in a mash and roasted. Afterwards it is cut into small pieces and eaten with cocoa-nut dressing.

*Tolólo Kumála.*

Scrape sweet potato and mix it into a mash with the *lóló*. Then wrap in plantain leaves in small bundles, and bake.

Puddings are not chewed by the native. His practice is to swallow the pieces whole.<sup>1</sup>

The interior of Fiji supplies a curious pudding. The flower-cob of a kind of reed called "*Ndurúka*"<sup>2</sup> is boiled and sweetened with wild sugar-cane juice, or with sugar, if it is to be had. There are probably more than a dozen kinds of wild sugar-cane in Fiji. The native names of some are : *Nanáí*, *Mbúta*, *Málainggéle*, *Kúkusaúlóa*, *Sánganimbóto*, *Méndra ndóvu na Mbúiningóne*, *Kitu*, *Kambakavále*, *Sakúri*, *Silóma*.

In times of famine the Fijian was able to live where another would starve. After a hurricane, for instance, the unripe fruit and roots destroyed by the force of the wind are placed in a hole in the ground called a

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rivers states that in some islands of Melanesia knives are made for eating pudding. "Hist. of Melan. Soc.," vol i. p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> The *ndurúka* is mentioned as food by Mr. A. M. Hocart. *Man*, 1914, p. 118.

“*Ndavúki*”<sup>1</sup> There a process of fermentation takes place, much in the same way as when ensilage is made. The mass, when carefully covered with leaves and earth, ferments together in about a month. The natives call this “*Mandrái*” (bread), and it has a spongy nature like bread. The taste and odour are such that only a native could enjoy it. There can be no doubt that Fijian bread made in this way is life-sustaining.

Many plants from the woods become useful in times of famine. The seed-pod of the mangrove in former times was peeled and put in a bread-pit (*ndavúki*) and turned into bread. The pith of the *yaka* vine was boiled as an article of diet. Certain poisonous arums called “*Vía*” are also treated in the same manner, and though coarse, help to tide over the period of stress. Bulbous and tuber species as the “*Tikáu*” (wild yam) both red and white in colour, the “*Tivóli*” (*Dioscorea nummularia*, Linn.), wild “*Káilè*” (a wild yam), take the place of the *yam* and *táro* if there be a shortage of the latter. The wild *káilè* is acrid, and, on that account, the natives first cook it, then scrape and soak it in water until it becomes mild. Further boiling or roasting reduces it to an eatable state. This process is aided by mixing the scrapings of the “*Walái*” nut (*Entada scandens*, Bth.) with the *káilè*.

In order to get at these roots the islanders fire the country where they are found. Many mysterious

<sup>1</sup> The Samoans know this. Dr. G. Brown, “Melanesians and Polynesians,” p. 131.

fires that sweep through the tropical forest can be explained in this way. Consequently, the Government has made the practice illegal.

The soft head of the cocoa-nut palm and the stalk of the banana have been resorted to in seasons when food is scarce. The natives, especially those living on the coast, have learned to eat many articles of diet raw. These include shell-fish, as the "*Sídhi*" (trochus), the "*Vasúa*" (giant clam), the "*Dhawáki*" (sea-urchin), cockles as the "*Kaikúku*," "*Kaikiso*," "*Kaindáwa*," "*Kaitastrisiri*"; also the "*Tandrúku*" (mollusc, chiton), a few kinds of the *Bêche-de-mer*, as the "*Ndrindáiro*," "*Sémilóli*"; the "*Ndíó*" (oyster), and a slug or worm in the sands called the "*Vetúna*."

In many parts of the Group raw mullet are much appreciated, though in Ngau, for instance, this fish is barred as raw food.

In addition to the above, several kinds of seaweed are masticated without being cooked.

### *Food Prohibitions.*

A number of food prohibitions have been noted under the head of "Fishing and its Superstitions." Others are as follow:—

The last food which a man eats before he dies is in some parts denied by the wife to herself for some days after the burial. It is looked upon as the food which supported the spirit of the husband on its journey to the spirit-land.

An interesting prohibition of food is continued at

the present time at Mbau. When a high chief dies, a certain tribe from the mainland has the sole privilege of burying the body. During the work of burial these native sextons may not eat any kind of food until the grave is filled in, and until they have partaken of a kind of fruit called the "*Kúra*."<sup>1</sup> The *kúra* appears to be a small species of jack-fruit, and falls to the ground before it is fit to eat. The pulp of it is very soft and has a most atrocious and clinging odour.

When a child is born, the mother is often prohibited from eating salt with her food during the three or four days subsequent to the birth.

Certain kinds of fish were, in former days, kept exclusively for the chiefs. A severe penalty was exacted from the culprits who secretly ate food kept sacred by custom for the use of their superiors. The most important of these prohibitions had reference to the turtle. It is only of late that ordinary folk have been allowed to eat this valuable animal. Naturally, the breaking down of old usages with regard to the turtle has caused a good deal of friction. As late as 1912, the chiefs endeavoured to influence the Government to restrict the use of the turtle as in earlier times. Their persistence has, in some cases, restored to them their ancient right. In a large number of districts in Fiji the dorsal fin of the shark and *Sánga* (a fine fish), as well as the heads of most fish, are reserved for the chiefs of the neighbourhood.

<sup>1</sup> William Mariner tells of similar funeral customs, "Tonga," vol. ii, p. 187.



A most fruitful source of prohibition of food is the old clan-interdependence of "*Véimbatiki*" which has a great similarity to our ancient feudal system. All chiefly or conquering towns had henchmen or "*Mbáti*," as they were called. It is surprising how almost all the towns of Fiji are in this manner linked together. For instance, Réwa has for *mbáti* the town of Tóngá near by. Tóngá, again, has for its *mbáti* the town of Tóngandrávu, higher up the river. If Réwa went to war, the chiefs in that town would communicate with Tóngá, and thence the message would proceed to Tóngandrávu. Tóngandrávu would help Tóngá, and they together would help Réwa.<sup>1</sup>

Veráta is a remarkable case in point, for that town was, at one time, the most powerful in Fiji. Up to the present moment, there are many villages which hold fast to Veráta by the old bond of "*véimbatiki*." The *mbátis*, in order of precedence, are Veráta, Túmbalévu, Nanámu, Naimásimási, Kúku, Vúngaléi, Kasávu, and Nanggélendámu. A call of war would have followed that order. The interesting thing for our purpose is that all these recognise their relationship in their feasts. If all were eating together at Veráta, the chiefs of the latter place would pass over their food to the *mbáti*, and the *mbáti* would hand their portion to the chiefs.

In this particular system of *Véimbatiki*, the chiefly food at Veráta was fish, *vákalólo* (pudding), Fijian

<sup>1</sup> Mr. B. Thomson avers that the help so given was doubtful. "The Fijians," p. 88, note.

bread, cocoa-nuts, and crabs. But if one of the *mbáti* happened to be present these classes of food would be given to him. The *mbátis*' especial sustenance was pig, plantains, and eels. If a chief happened to be eating with his retainers, the eels, plantains, and pigs would be handed by them to their superior.

The foregoing prohibitions took place only when the high chiefs and retainers ate together. The reason for the peculiar usage is given by a Fijian thus : the *mbáti* are the warriors of the chiefs. If they eat the food of the latter they will be courageous and strong in battle. It would be unwise, therefore, for the chief to withhold that which would eventually be to his own good.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CANNIBALISM

CANNIBALISM was a hideous excrescence upon the true nature of the Fijian, a pestiferous, cancer-like growth, the roots of which struck deep down into his social, political and religious life. That human flesh was unnecessary to him has been proven by the fact that he exists very well without it. And if it be unnecessary, it is also unnatural, and by no means the chief index to his general character. Still the Fijian has been usually classed in the world's category as a cannibal, and we cannot therefore let it pass without discussion.

The question has been frequently raised as to whether cannibalism was long practised in Fiji, and has been answered in various ways. Before we endeavour to give a reply three circumstances should be noticed.

Anthropophagy is a very old practice of the human race, not as an unnatural appetite, but as a specimen of sympathetic and religious magic. In this form it is very general throughout the history of mankind, and may, therefore, be legitimately classed as the earliest kind of cannibalism. Savage races have, by

means of a misdirected logic, inferred that the appropriation of the symbols of strength and courage would give them those qualities. Thus generally, lions' claws, tigers' claws, and boars' tusks are reckoned amongst the most effectual charms; likewise the flesh of the bear was eaten for the same reason, while that of the timid deer must be shunned, lest the bravery of the warrior vanish away. In the early days of stress, conflict, and ignorance, it was an easy transition of thought from the flesh of a bear to the heart and liver of a man, for, in primitive psychology, these organs were the seats of courage and energy. There is an instance recorded by Professor Tylor of an English merchant in Shanghai, at the time of the Taeping attack, who met his Chinese servant carrying home a man's heart. When questioned, the servant said it was the heart of a rebel, and that he was going to eat it in order to make him brave.<sup>1</sup> In some Australian tribes, the fatty portions of a corpse are consumed for a similar reason. Africa is also full of such strange ideas.

Now the practice of eating human flesh from a superstitious motive is found all over New Britain, New Guinea, the Solomons, and the New Hebrides, and these islands were the pathway of some at least of the Polynesian races when they first came to the Pacific. Professor Macmillan Brown thinks the Polynesians learned cannibalism at their resting-places on their voyage from South Asia, and that they carried it

<sup>1</sup> "History of Mankind," p. 131.

as an intermittent custom into New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> If they did so, they must also have learned the superstitions by which the practice was supported.

Even in modern times, the belief in sympathetic magic survived side by side with the established appetite for human flesh. Dr. L. Fison narrates the story of a Fijian woman who rubbed her infant's lips with the flesh of a slain champion in the full assurance that the child would thereby receive some of the warrior's bravery.<sup>2</sup> I have been told that the heart and liver of the chief of Ndávinggéle, Kandávu (by name, R. Tókandúandúa) were eaten for the self-same reason by the chief of the neighbouring village of Nambúkelévuirá. An interesting parallel to Dr. Fison's incident was told me by the Rev. H. R. Rycroft, of the Solomon Islands, for he states he saw there a woman rub human flesh upon her infant's lips.<sup>3</sup>

A second fact, which bears out the theory of the magical and religious origin of cannibalism, is found in the circumstance that most of the Polynesian peoples have eaten human flesh at some time in their history. Now, if we find a practice common to many branches of the same stock who have not been in contact for centuries, we infer that the custom must have been known to them before they were sundered. It is unlikely that peoples, settled in so many isolated

<sup>1</sup> "Maori and Polynesian," p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> "Tales of Old Fiji," Intro. p. xxxvii.

<sup>3</sup> "A mouthful of the brave man's flesh and blood is thought to convey the coveted power." Florence Coombe, in "Islands of Enchantment," p. 222. Reference is to San Cristoval.

islands of the sea, should have initiated the horrible usage after their settlement in those islands. It is fair to add, however, that the particular form which cannibalism took in any one island was conditioned by the circumstances and exigencies of that locality.

In the third place, we find that the ancient legends are interwoven with cannibalistic narrative, and without which the stories have no meaning at all. Consequently, we are led to believe that these stories point to a very early knowledge of the custom. The great culture-myths and heroes of New Zealand, as a case in point, reach back to a time preceding the arrival of the Maoris in their present home, and these stories hold together by reason of the cannibalism related in them. There is only one conclusion at which we can arrive, that cannibalism was known at a very early date.

Ancient myths in Fiji likewise show that the early spirits or heroes there were addicted to the custom. At Mba there were two gods, named Ráwailévu and Túinaidhíndra, who fell out and fought each other. The cause of their fighting was that the latter ate at Malólo a certain tribe from the mainland called Kaisára. Ndengéi, the chief *Kalóu Vu* of Fiji, was also said to demand a sacrifice of human flesh.

From the three considerations given above, it is obvious that the Fijian, as part of the Polynesian race, knew of the practice of eating human flesh before he finally settled in the Pacific, and that he developed it according to the circumstances or exigencies of his life.





A WARRIOR WITH NECKLACE.



In no place did anthropophagy develop to such an extent as in Fiji, except perhaps in the Marquesas Islands. These two groups are much alike in social history and contour, factors which are most important in the study of cannibalism.

In the Fiji Group, cannibalism assumed the proportions of a monstrous appetite. The people acquired a strong liking for human flesh as food. The custom grew in astonishing measure in the eighteenth century. When the missionaries arrived in the Group, it was estimated that thousands were annually destroyed in this way. It became so customary, that the flesh got the name of "*kendí dhói*," or the relish of vegetable foods at feasts. A horrible story is told at Mádhuáta that it was the duty there of certain tribes to find the relish at the time of the offering of first-fruits to the chiefs. When the sun rose on the appointed day, a human body was found tied to a stake, with garlands hung about it. In this gruesome fashion the task of the tribes appointed had been fulfilled.

The appetitive phase of cannibalism I believe to be a comparatively late growth in Fiji, which belief I base on the following considerations:—

(a) The Fijian people are so far distant from other groups of islands that it would have been impossible to get their captives from foreign nations.

(b) They would therefore be forced to find victims from amongst themselves; a fact which would necessitate the existence of war.

(c) If, however, this had been done at the wholesale

rate which the first missionaries were forced to witness, there would have been a swift decline in the population. The statistics of the Hervey Islands showed that the population there dwindled through fighting from two thousand to sixty, and again from sixty to five, within the memory of the Rev. John Williams. Now the population of Fiji was traditionally large. One hundred and fifty years ago it was estimated at between 300,000 and 500,000. Given that the tradition is true, it would seem impossible that cannibalism could have existed on a very large scale before that time. About the time the missionaries arrived (eighty years ago), it was unanimously agreed that the population was at least 200,000, notwithstanding the terrible ravages, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, of a pestilence known as the "*Lila mbalávu*," which carried off at least one-third of the total number of Fijian natives in the islands. It is unlikely, therefore, that war had been carried on to any extent before that time, and consequently, that anthropophagy had grown into anything like the proportions which the early missionaries saw.

(d) Again, it is a well-known fact that Fijian warfare was comparatively bloodless before the introduction of firearms. In the year 1808, the natives had no use for muskets ; for in that year Charles Savage, a Swede, was wrecked on Nairái. It was he who told the chief at Mbau to look in the wrecked vessel for muskets, and also for shot. The natives did as they were directed and found that the guns had been taken from

the ship by local inhabitants, and had been built into a yam-house. They were not so badly damaged that they would not shoot, and, from that time, war became more deadly in Fiji. There can be no doubt that the superiority of Mbau in battle, and the swift growth of cannibalism in that town, were due to the introduction of firearms at the period mentioned.

(e) That war on a wide scale has been carried on only in the nineteenth century seems to be confirmed also by the fact that the first "*Vúniválu*" (war-lord) was appointed not more than three or four generations ago. The tradition suggests that before the appointment of the *Vúniválu* in Mbau there was no need of a special officer.

(f) The ancient legends describe a peaceful immigration of a few half-shipwrecked and forlorn people. The explanation given by the people of the use of stone implements is that their forefathers lost overboard in a gale the case which held their house-building tools. And so far from being an entrance at that early date of a victorious host, it is not till long after that any serious war is even hinted at; not, indeed, till several tribes had broken away from the original stock and become independent. Steady immigrations from the eastern Polynesian islands would accentuate the state of war, until certain tribes became hereditary enemies, and never lost an opportunity of fighting one another.

All these arguments indicate a comparatively recent development of warfare on anything like a large scale,

and therefore of cannibalism in its special phase as the satisfaction of an unnatural appetite.<sup>1</sup>

We now proceed to discover, if possible, the cause of this appetite. Let us first examine some theories that have been set forth by different authors.

The simple hunger theory is supported by some, and there would be some force in it if Fiji were a barren land. We know that intense hunger will compel the most gentle people to eat their fellows, as, for example, in shipwreck or siege. Mothers have been known at such times to devour their own offspring. So great, however, is the racial objection to this horrid meal, that even the extremest hunger fails to overcome it, except in isolated cases. An important case is described by a traveller named Werner in a book entitled "British Central Africa." The following is a quotation:—

"In Shire there was a terrible famine in 1862-3. Nine-tenths of the population perished, many committing suicide, but no cannibalism."

When we bear in mind the equality of the Fijians and the Shire people in racial standing, we are compelled to realise that the simple hunger theory is inadequate.

Besides, Fiji is a fruitful land, rich, as we have seen, in edible roots and plants. The surrounding sea and

<sup>1</sup> On the connection between war and cannibalism see Ellis, "Polynesian Researches," vol. i, p. 359; W. Mariner, "Tonga Islands," vol. i, pp. 264-265; Capt. Erskine, "Western Pacific Islands," pp. 39, 157, 158, 249, 260, 272, 320, 334. The latter refers to Samoa, Fiji, Tanua, and Vate.

the rivers teem with fish. It would be indeed difficult for a Fijian to arrive at the starving stage. The stories of the people, handed down from the past, have no record of a disastrous famine. The only case in which a Fijian could be brought to absolute starvation would be when besieged in time of war. But in all the cases of siege with which we are acquainted, those who ate human flesh in sheer distress were glad enough to give it up when the siege was raised. We infer therefore, that while the very extreme of hunger is necessary to force a person to accept this method of satisfying hunger, it is but a temporary cause, and, consequently, is not calculated to establish a custom. We must look for some supplementary reason.

Dr. L. Fison evidently felt the difficulty, and endeavoured to meet it. His hypothesis is that we are flesh-eating animals, and it is the scarcity of flesh-meat which causes an overpowering flesh-hunger.<sup>1</sup> His assertion, also, is considerably neutralised when we remember that the sea waters of Fiji are full of fish; and the Fijians were, and are, expert fishermen.

It is true, as Dr. Fison says, that pigs and poultry were of late introduction into the Group, but we have to face the further fact that Dr. Fison seems to have forgotten, viz., that they were brought to Fiji just before the very period in which cannibalism began to develop most swiftly.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, according to

<sup>1</sup> "Tales of Old Fiji," Intro. p. xlv.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Im Thurn says that it developed rapidly only after the white man came. *Med. Journ. of Australia*, 1914, p. 297.

Dr. Fison's theory, the flesh-hunger became most powerful in its demands when the means were present to satisfy it, an evident contradiction.

The doctor furthermore overlooks the important circumstance that the chiefs, who were the greatest delinquents in the matter of eating human flesh, had numbers of pigs and poultry with which to appease their flesh-hunger.<sup>1</sup> They had also the monopoly of turtle, and well-cooked turtle-flesh is an excellent substitute for roast meat.

The theory of flesh-hunger, as applied to Fiji, has no foundation in fact, for at present large numbers of natives are quite content with fish, birds, molluscs, and crustacea. An occasional pig gives them merely a taste of flesh-food. As we have seen, the people in Dhólo (the interior) often lack even fish, and use leaves of trees and shrubs as an appetiser for their vegetable diet.

The flesh-food theory has been strained to meet the case. It is inconceivable that, for instance, men who had sufficient vegetable foods would think of eating a man to satisfy a supposed hunger for flesh.

Another theory was held by the Rev. T. Williams, that revenge is the chief motive of cannibalism. This again seems but a partial explanation of the problem, for nowhere has the desire for revenge been so intense as in the old Italian vendetta. Napier, in his "Florentine History" writes of it: "And for centuries after,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. Brown holds that scarcity of animal food does not cause anthropophagy. "Melanesians and Polynesians," p. 140.

a private offence was never forgotten until avenged, and generally involved a succession of mutual injuries. . . . Vengeance was sometimes allowed to sleep for five and thirty years, and then suddenly struck a victim, who perhaps had not seen the light when the original injury was inflicted."<sup>1</sup> Hellish torture seems to be the very worst thing that revenge in Italy could contrive. There does not appear to be any sign of cannibalism as a result of the vendetta. To take a concrete case, the only violent methods used in the bitter struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibellines were torture and murder.

The native explanation of cannibalism is too much like Charles Lamb's story of roast pig to bear much examination. We are unable to believe that the natural abhorrence in human nature of the flesh of our own kind would vanish upon the discovery that it tasted nice after being in a conflagration. Nor could this be answered by saying that the Fijians were in a lower state of civilisation. For, if we descend in the scale of life as low as the superior animals, we do not find that they are in the habit of eating their own species. The abhorrence of eating one's own kind is evidently rooted deeply in all kinds of superior life as an instinct of self-preservation.

The true explanation of the cannibalistic appetite seems to be in a combination of the simple hunger theory and the revenge hypothesis.

The people of Fiji were intensely tribal, the separ-

<sup>1</sup> Napier, "Florentine History," vol. i, chap. vii.

ation of interests being very largely due to the contour of their land. High and steep mountain ranges prevented regular communication, until the very languages changed. In the small island of Kandávu there are upwards of half a dozen minor dialects, while the general speech of Kandávu is quite different from that of Mbau. The same may be said of every other section of the country.

Jealousies arose, and then bitter enmity, which occasioned war of a most determined character. The Marquesas Islands afford corroborative proof that war is frequent in countries where the communities are separated. They are very mountainous, and the inhabitants have become local in their ideas, and jealous in their disposition. In Tonga, on the other hand, there are few mountains, and it is well known that, in former days, the Tongans were not lovers of war. The Maoris were great fighters, and cannibals as well. Again, the Caribs, whose name gives us the term cannibalism, were fierce and warlike.<sup>1</sup> Alexander reports the same of the Hervey Islanders.<sup>2</sup> The Hervey Islanders were cannibals.

In Fijian warfare, the characteristic mode of assault was not to be found in hand-to-hand conflict. In harmony with his general system of life, the native resorted to trickery and ambush; and if any other way could be found by which an enemy might be conquered he would never fight. One of his methods

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, "Primitive Culture," vol. i, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Islands of the Pacific," pp. 267-8.



of warfare was to cut off the water supply, and destroy the gardens, of the foe. Fruit trees alone were the exception. These were spared if possible. If an opportunity were afforded them, the besieged would retaliate in the same way. Much distress would thus arise, for the people in the besieged town would be prevented by the enemy from seeking food in the woods. Sallies would be made at intervals with the object of intimidating the investing forces, and perhaps a dead body or two would be brought back. Finally, driven by pangs of hunger, and goaded by motives of revenge, they would cast aside their natural abhorrence for human flesh, and, in mad desperation, make a feast of the dead body. Be it understood that they were already acquainted with the eating of various parts of the human organism, but not from motives of hunger.

On this question, Westermarck is interesting. He quotes the Talmud, "Commit a sin twice and you will think it perfectly allowable,"<sup>1</sup> and so the act of eating human flesh for food, if repeated several times, would gradually acquire a certain legitimate appearance, and would become more highly favoured as war grew more prevalent.

By association, a further development would take place. If a man saw his deadly enemy in time of comparative peace, his desire for revenge, having been, in days gone by, closely connected with extreme hunger, would suggest eating; which suggestion would gradually acquire strength according to its

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, "Origin of the Moral Ideas," p. 160.

frequency. Revenge thus becomes the dominant motive in cannibalism. Consequently, one of the worst insults that could be offered to a Fijian would be to say, "I would like to eat you."

Revenge occupied a peculiarly large place in the Fijian community. The people were bitterly vindictive. This is curious when we contrast their past with their present temperament. In these days no more affable, generous race could be found. Yet Dr. Fison is able to record the following words, which are quoted by Dr. Codrington. They constitute a prayer for vengeance offered by a Fijian. "Let those that speak evil of us perish. Let the enemy be clubbed, swept away, utterly destroyed, piled up in heaps. Let their teeth be broken, may they fall headlong into a pit. Let us live and let our enemies perish."<sup>1</sup>

The desire for vengeance became an inherent part of the Fijian's nature, and was increased constantly by ever-fermenting tribal wars. This fact is noticed by Tylor—"The rancorous hatred between neighbouring tribes keeps savages in ceaseless fear and trouble."<sup>2</sup> The Fijian never forgot an insult paid him by a member of another tribe, although he might have to wait years for the accomplishment of his purpose.

There is a unique element in the history of Fijian revenge which should not be overlooked. It has already been made clear that the natural life of the

<sup>1</sup> Codrington, "Melanesian Anthropology and Folklore," p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> "Anthropology," p. 416.

clan and family is kindly enough. But it often happened that, in tribal wars, brothers and relatives were separated and opposed to each other in battle, on account of the distracting influences of marital connections. Not only so, but brothers sometimes grew up to hate one another as rivals for chiefly power. I quote a statement illustrating the foregoing from Dr. Fison's "Tales from Old Fiji."<sup>1</sup> "*Dhadhāvēitadhini* signifies murderous hate between brother and brother." In the days of polygamy, sons of equal rank by different mothers were natural rivals. The mothers had from the birth of the children fostered this deadly feeling of antipathy. And from the time the children were able to think, they were scheming to murder one another. It is reported by Dr. Fison that, when Dhákombáu and Ráivalíta were unbrotherly rivals, the former sprang out from behind a house, and seized Ráivalíta, crying out at the same time to two of his followers, "Strike." They struck, and Ráivalíta fell. The dying man recovered consciousness, and, looking up, saw Dhákombáu standing with a triumphant smile upon his face. Ráivalíta thereupon partially raised himself, and clutching a handful of bloody dust, threw it in his brother's face with a curse as he fell back and died.

A similar bitter hate was often engendered between father and son, uncle and nephew. The natural fountain of love and respect was broken up, and, instead of the sweet waters of harmony, a great flood

<sup>1</sup> "Tales from Old Fiji," Intro. p. xxxiii.

of horrible hate and venomous rage flowed over the family and tribal life.

To sum up, the desire for vengeance in the Fijian breast has been most intensely developed by (a) constant tribal war lengthened out by repeated insult and injury, and (b) malignant hatred which sprang up between rival relatives and chiefs.

As noted above, the desire so caused was strengthened by intense hunger in times of siege, amongst a people who already knew from ages past the superstitious custom of eating portions of the human body, for the sake of the energy supposed to reside therein. Considering the strength of the motive passions, it would be no great step to the eating of human flesh for food. An appetite would be created which could easily be aroused again even in times of peace, in view of the fact that the desire for vengeance is one of the most persistent passions of human nature. And especially the appetite would be excited in the native at the sight of his bitter enemy, on account of the close association originally formed between hunger and revenge in times of siege.

Finally, the horrible custom was systematised. Certain utensils were used for cannibal feasts alone, such as pots and forks. Also, particular ceremonies were monopolised by it. A fearful drum-beat was evolved, which, by the way, is sometimes used even now when the turtle is captured. Weird and revolting chants were composed, and all great occasions were marked by the presentation of a human body. Dis-

crimination as to victims became more defined, and inferior tribes forbore to eat the members of the more chiefly tribes, and some clans were looked upon as the proper food of their superiors. Women were generally excluded from the feasts.

One more word in respect of the custom remains to be said. Offerings of the slain were made to cannibal gods. How did these gods become cannibals? The answer is that if the gods acquired an appetite for human flesh it could only have happened after the appetite of the people had been to some extent formed. Let it be remembered that priests were recipients of gifts to the gods; and it is but natural that they should so conduct their religious ceremonies that the gods' share of the gruesome repast should be allotted to themselves. Such a matter was simple enough. It was sufficient to spread a report that the god would be angry if his supply were not forthcoming. The god's appetite was a reflection of the abnormal desire of his devotees, and the priest was the interested custodian of it.

The conclusion that we have come to shows that the unnatural growth was a result of definite circumstances in the social and material environment of the Fijian. We who have lived in Fiji have reason to believe, from the evidence which is to be seen in Fijian society to-day, that, if circumstances be changed, the appetite caused by them dies away also. These people, like the Tongans, are heartily ashamed of their past evil habits. The Mbauans, who were the worst of all in their desire

for human flesh, are exceedingly humiliated if visitors are shown, in their presence, the stone upon which the cannibal victims used to be dashed before being placed in the oven. The recurrence of anthropophagy is therefore quite improbable, so long as the present *régime* is continued.

Our study of the Fijian is for the time being at an end. At present old things are passing away and all things are being made new. The discussion has been chiefly of things that have been, and of such things as are resultant from, or typical of, the past. Here and there references have been made to the new order of things, and we are conscious that with a changing society, a new character is being formed in the Fiji islander. He is in a stage of transition, and is extremely liable to be overcome by the temptations and dangers of the period. The dangers are to be seen in the possibility of extinction, arising from indulgence in vices unknown to the native before, vices which are peculiar to civilisation. We are also aware that lassitude and laziness may yet prove fatal to many both in social life and moral character. Disintegration of classes is also surely setting in ; for gradually there is coming into view a richer and a poorer class, a law-breaking and a law-abiding class, and a religious as against a sceptic section of the community. What the outcome will be, not even the keenest mind can positively assert. During the last seven years the population has been gradually increasing except

during the influenza outbreak of 1919. Further, a reaction against the communal bonds is in evidence. Companies for the production and sale of the fruits of the soil make sporadic appearances and then lose energy. That the people are not inherently lazy seems to be proven by the fact that the contingent of natives sent to France did good work behind the lines, also by the achievements of a few who have been able to cut aloof from the commune. With a good government, and wise teaching, both of the moral and spiritual kinds, they will probably survive in the long run. If they eventually die away, the Fijians will not have lived wholly in vain. For during the past fifty years some good, noble, and clean men have been produced, who have had a worthy object in life. Some choice spirits have been found, free from avarice and self-seeking, who, considering the pit from which they were dug, have given estimable lives and characters to the service of their fellows. And what more could be said of the best of us ?





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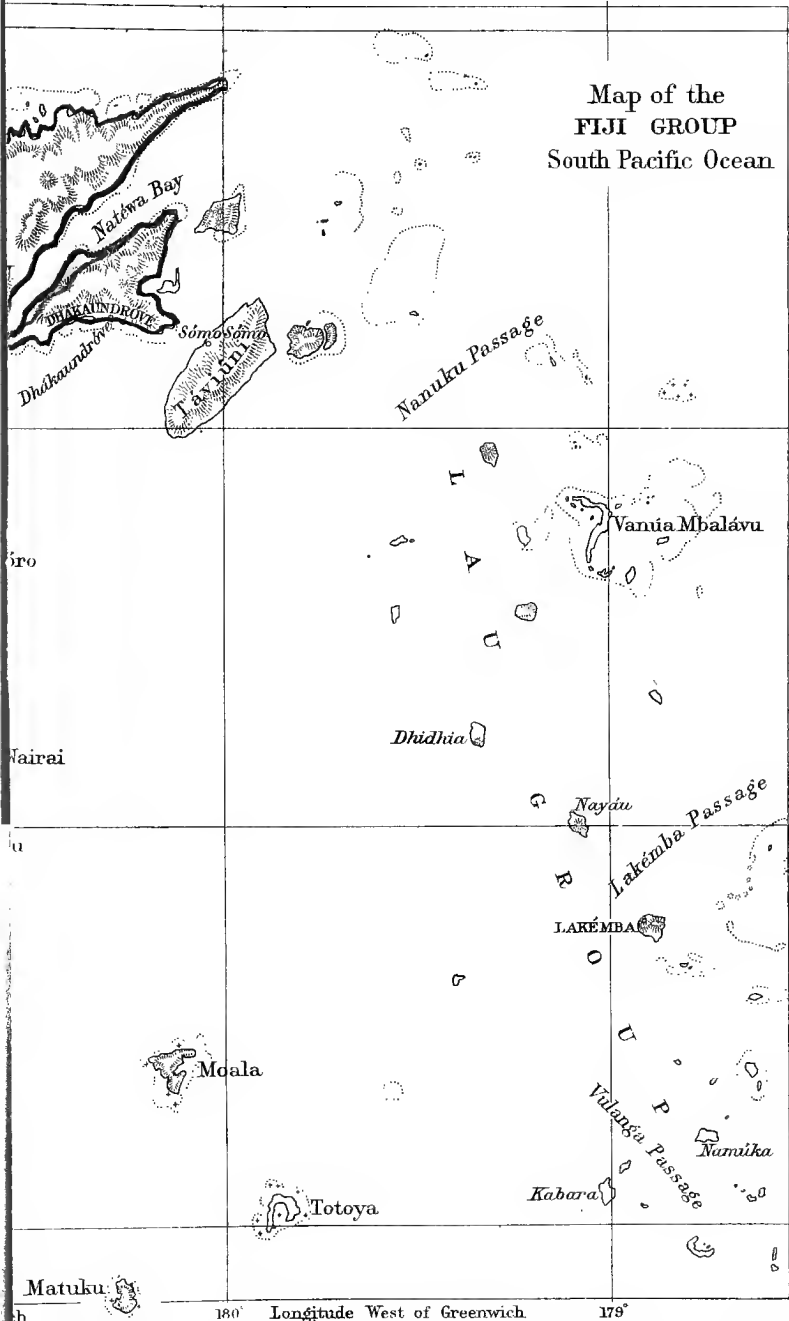
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180°

179°

# Map of the FIJI GROUP South Pacific Ocean







# INDEX



# INDEX

## A

- Afiti, witches of, 32  
 After-life, belief in, 41  
*Ai mbúlumbúlu*, 81  
*Ai rénguréngu*, 80  
*Ai rónggorónggo*, 80  
 Ancestor-worship, 4, 38, 39 ff.  
*Andi ni Wáimaróu*, 71  
 Animism, 39 ff.  
 Aryans, megalithic, 1

## B

- Baker, Rev. Thos., 81, 83  
 Banks' Island, spirit possession in, 36  
 Berkeley, Mr. H., on *Nggálongga-lóvi*, 82  
 Bread-fruit, 211  
 British Guiana, spirits in, 27  
 Brown, Prof. Macmillan, on Oriental lying, 135  
 — on cannibalism, 224

## C

- Calvert, Mrs., 84  
 Cannibalism, 223 ff.  
 — amongst the gods, 239  
 — ancient practice of, 223  
 — drum-beat of, 203, 238  
 — flesh hunger theory, 231-2  
 — Mbauans ashamed of, 239-40  
 — simple hunger theory, 230-31  
 — sympathetic magic in, 223-6  
 — utensils of, 238  
 — women excluded from, 239  
 Chiefs,  
 — as leaders, 104-8, 111-12  
 — change of attitude in, 8

## Chiefs,

- failure of, 113  
 — feasts offered to, 209  
 — status of, 7  
 — terms of respect to, 94-6  
 — their power to confiscate goods, 119  
 — titles of, 90-91

## Children,

- birth of, 10 ff.  
 — birthday gift of, 11-12  
 — entrance into house of, 12  
 — feeding of, 11  
 — firstborn, 13  
 — mortality of, 10  
 — new, 13  
 — of Mbáuan chiefs, 10  
 — superstitions about, 155-6  
 — vomiting, 13  
 Christianity, triumph of, 139  
 Christians and superstition, 163-4  
 Circus acrobats, 36  
 Clubs, as symbols, 75  
 Cocoa-nuts, as symbols, 72  
 Communism, lack of initiative and incentive under, 109 ff.  
 Conscience, Fijian words for, 142  
*Conus Marmoreus*, as symbol, 74  
 Crane, as travelling sign, 153-4

## D

- Dead, gifts to the, 4b, 43, 44  
*Dhadhavéitadhini*, 237  
 Dhákaundróve, chiefs of, 45, 93  
 Dhákombáu, 64, 104, 112  
*Dhíva*, as charm, 76  
 Dhólo, dark skin of natives in, 8  
 Diet, articles of, 210 ff.  
 — coastal and interior, 213  
 Dreams, 41  
*Duk Duk* society, 35

## E

- Etiquette, 130 ff.  
— in *yanggóna*-drinking, 134, 157-8

## F

- Feasts, 207 ff.  
— *Mangli ni yavóu*, 20  
— *Mbóngittni*, 12  
— *Távundéki*, 13  
— *Túnundrá*, 12  
Fiji, union of Polynesian and Melanesian in, 1-4  
— population in, 228  
Fijians,  
— Christianised, 113-15  
— confessions of, 144  
— courtesy of, 130 ff.  
— crime rare amongst, 146-7  
— curiosity of, 24  
— dependence on superiors, 103  
— diplomacy of, 136  
— early character of, 146  
— environment and mentality of, 98 ff.  
— eschatology of, 116-18  
— fear in, 25 ff.  
— fear in Christian, 26-7  
— ingenuity of, 182  
— interdependent spirit of, 102-3, 106  
— lack of an ideal, 110  
— lack of wonder in, 24-5  
— laxity of, 124  
— lying of, 135-9, 140 ff.  
— obedience to chiefs of, 106-7, 111  
— revenge and cannibalism among, 233 ff.  
— self-control of, 2  
— sense of shame in, 143  
— voluble in preaching, 114  
— wealth of, 122  
— work in numbers, 101-2, 106  
Fish-fence, 174  
Fishing,  
— bait in, 172-3  
— carried on by clans, 166-7  
— carried on by women, 167 ff.  
— superstitions connected with, 167-8, 169, 170-74, 177-9, 181  
— use of oil in, 169  
— use of spear in, 168

- Fish-traps, 172-3  
Fison, Dr. L., on cannibalism, 225, 231, 236  
Food-prohibitions, 219-22

## G

- Games,  
— *a dhéré*, 18  
— drawing the reed, 17  
— hiding the shell, 17  
— *lavo*, 16  
— *tupe*, 17  
— *véitngga*, 15  
Ghosts, obsession by, 44

## H

- Halley's comet, as sign, 153  
Hervey Islands, war in, 228, 234  
Hocart, Mr. A. M., on *Vásu*, 6 n.

## I

- Images in Dhólo, 70  
— superstition about, 71  
Initiation ceremonies, 18 ff.  
— of circumcision, 19  
— *lúva mási*, 19  
— of tattooing women, 23  
— of *Vakamási*, 19  
— of *Vakatóhayáddha*, 21-3  
— of Wáimaróu clan, 18  
*Ironggèle*, 191

## J

- Javan Murex, as symbol, 74  
Jevons, Pror. F. B., on taboo, 125-6

## K

- Kaisi*, 8  
*Kalóu Vu*, 39, 40, 45 ff., 58 ff.  
— connected by marriage, 62  
— priest of, 58  
*Kalóu Vu váta*, 59, 60

*Kalou Vu vda* as clan-bond, 100  
 — discussion on, 61 n.  
 — instances of, 59-60  
*Kandavu*, confinement of women in, 11  
 — etiquette in, 132  
 — rock at, 38  
 — superstition in, 152, 155  
 — tests after death in, 117  
 — turtle-fishing in, 176, 180  
*Kandavu Lévu, Rátu*, 153  
*Kato támbu*, 177  
*Káva*, as symbol, 75  
 — as lustration, 76  
*Káwa*, 172-3  
*Kérékéré*, 120-23  
 — amusing instances of, 122-3  
 — evil effect of, 120-21, 123  
*Kévékévè*, 12, 13  
*Kuila*, 191

## L

*Lakémba*, rocks at, 37-8  
*Lála*, 104 ff.  
 — cause of trouble, 105  
 — personal, 105  
*Láli*, 191, 196 ff.  
 Land, as property of clan, 118  
 — disputes over, 58  
 Langham, Rev. F., 69  
*Ldsu*, 140  
 Lau, chiefly language in, 94-6  
*Láwa Dhéré*, 185  
*Láwa ni mbalólo*, 184  
*Láwa Sukáu*, 186  
*Lewéti*, rock at, 53  
*Lila mbaldvu*, 228  
*Luvé ni Wai*, 32  
 — guild of, 34-5  
 — obsession by, 35-6  
 — secrecy of, 34, 35.  
 Lyth, Mrs., 84

## M

*Mádhuaá*, animal-worship in, 30  
 — cannibalism in, 227  
 — spirit-worship in, 34  
 — superstition in, 151  
*Mána*, 4, 87-8  
*Mandrá vündi*, 51  
*Mánumánu ni Singalévu*, 33  
 Maoris, cannibalism amongst the, 226, 234

*Maráma*, 91  
 — Polynesian use of, 93  
 Marquesas Islands, cannibalism in, 227  
 — war in, 234  
*Mási*, as symbol, 72 ff.  
 — as turban, 73  
 — doffing, 73  
 — in installation of chief, 73  
*Mátaiási Vávi*, 164  
*Mátanggáli*, 100 ff.  
 — at work, 101-2  
 — boycott by, 103  
*Máta ni vanúa*, 73, 160, 196  
 Matriarchate in *Kandavu*, 12  
 — in *Vanúa Lévu*, 3  
*Mba*, *ndráuniháu* in, 164  
 — superstition in, 151  
*Mbau*, descent through mother at, 3  
 — etiquette in, 132 ff.  
 — food-prohibition in, 219-20  
 — sacred stone at, 65  
 — signs of grief in, 193  
*Mbéngga*, god of, 30, 32  
*Mbóseyawá*, 67-8  
*Mbukéte vátu*, 94  
*Mbúvè*, 20  
 Messengers, 195-6  
 Meteors, as signs, 153  
*Módhémódhè*, 12, 13  
 Mothers, bathing of, 14  
 — salute of, 15

## N

*Naidhómbodhómbo*, warriors from, 48  
*Nainggóro*, ferry at, 43, 50  
*Nakásaléka*, 51  
*Nakórosulé*, stone-god of, 67-8  
*Nambúkelévu*, 42, 48, 51  
*Namúsi*, Réwa god at, 67  
*Nángga*, the, 40-41  
*Nángganángga*, 117  
*Nárikóso*, rock at, 53-4  
*Nassau*, Dr., 137  
*Nausóri*, superstition in, 151-2  
*Ndaudhina*, 32  
*Ndawáni*, Tanóvu's slide at, 54  
*Ndengéi*, 39, 63-4, 226  
 — in form of snake, 64  
 — *tatáu* of, 42  
*Nárduniháu*, 161-5  
 Nets, netting, net-making, 169 ff., 182 ff.

## O

- Omens, 28, 152 ff.  
 Óno, *Nádlindáhi* at, 56  
 Orion, 29  
 Osiris, 91  
 Owl, as sign, 31, 160

## P

- Patriarchate, in Viti Lévu, 3  
 Property, personal, 118-19  
 Puddings, Fijian, 214 ff.

## R

- Ra*, 91  
 — Polynesian use of, 93  
*Ra*, superstition in, 156  
*Rahu*, 92  
*Rajah*, 92  
*Rama*, 92  
*Rameses*, 92  
*Ranee*, 92  
*Réwa*, etiquette in, 132  
 — superstition in, 150, 151  
 — *véimbatiki* in, 221  
*Rói*, as symbol, 74-5  
*Róko*, 93  
*Rúsa*, 172  
 Rycroft, Rev. H. R., on cannibalism, 225

## S

- Sabbath, magical character of, 128-9  
*Sáki*, 184  
*Sála ni Ydlo*, 43  
*Sáva*, 175  
*Sauléle*, 185-6  
 Savage, Charles, 228  
 Sex question, 147-8  
 Sharks' teeth as ornaments, 78  
 Signs and omens, 152 ff.  
*Sika ni láwa*, 183  
 Snakes, superstitions about, 154  
 Spirit-worship, 31 ff.  
 — lack of ritual in, 33  
 — *Lúve ni Wai*, 32, 34, 35, 36

## Stars,

- *Aldebaran*, 29  
 — *Corona Australis*; *Na Lóvo*, 29  
 — *Hyades*; *Na Lááha*, 29  
 — *Milky Way*, 30  
 — *Orion*; *Na Iri*, 29  
 — *Pleiades*; *Na tárawáu*; *Soso-tárawáu*, 29  
 — shooting, 29-30, 153  
 — *Southern Cross*; *Na Nga*, 29  
 Stewart, Mr. J., his opinion of *Kérèkérè*, 120, 122  
 Superstitions, 149 ff.  
*Súsu*, 172

## T

- Taboo, 125 ff.  
 — as preparation for development of character, 125-6  
 — kinds of, 125  
 — lack of ethics in, 125  
 — religious aspect of, 128  
*Tahiti*, chiefs in, 93-4  
*Táma*, 131  
*Tamáta nátna*, 35  
*Tambúa*, 76, 77 ff.  
 — as heirloom, 87  
 — brought to Fiji, 86  
 — ceremony of presenting, 87  
 — general uses of, 79 ff.  
 — origin of, 77-8  
 — the death *tambúa*, 83  
*Tanóa*, 84  
*Tanóvu*, 39-40, 47 ff.  
 — *kitu* of, 47-8  
 — sharpening stone of, 55  
 — slingstone of, 55  
 — wives of, 48-9, 56  
*Tardhi*, 184-5, 189  
*Tárawáu*, 29, 84  
*Tatdu*, the, 41  
*Táutáumoláu*, 48-51  
*Tawdké*, 191-3  
*Tíngga*, 16  
*Tod*, 16  
*Toga virilis*, 73  
*Tonga*, chiefs in, 93, 94  
*Tóra*, 74  
 Totemism, 30  
*Túninddu*, 176-9  
 Turtle, fishing for, 175 ff.  
 — killing the, 181  
 Turtle-net, making the, 186-9

## V

- Vákadhóá tawdkè*, dance of, 192-3  
*Vákaroróngo*, 104  
*Vambéa*, Tanóvu's army at, 52  
*Vanúa Lévu*, absence of legend in, 2-3  
 — matriarchate in, 3  
*Vásvu*, and matriarchate and patriarchate, 4-7  
 — the first, 7  
 — of Heaven, 5  
*Véimbatiki*, 221  
*Veráta*, food-prohibition at, 221  
 — signals in, 193  
 — superstition in, 151  
 — *véimbatiki* at, 221  
 Virgins, 195  
*Vudka ni Veikdu*, 31  
*Vunikalóu*, 19-20, 21, 22

*Vúniwdlu*, 229

*Vútu*, 34

*Vúya*, 33

## W

Willcox, Lieut., 137

Williams, Rev. Thos., on cannibalism, 232

## Y

*Ydka*, 183-4

*Yaurávu*, grave offerings at, 40

*Ydva ni láwa*, 183-4

*Yanggóna*, chewing of, 20

— etiquette of drinking, 134, 157-8

— superstitions concerning, 157-60















